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greatest gift in the world.
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**All the Time
You Need**

ROBERT R. UPDEGRAFF

ALL THE TIME YOU NEED



The Greatest Gift in the World

PRENTICE-HALL, INC.
Englewood Cliffs, N. J.

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The Author's Invitation

Nearly half a century ago Arnold Bennett wrote a stimulating little book with the intriguing title *How to Live on 24 Hours a Day*, in which he said.

Philosophers have explained space They have not explained time It is the inexplicable raw material of everything With it, all is possible, without it, nothing The supply of time is truly a daily miracle, an affair genuinely astonishing when one examines it You wake up in the morning, and lo! your purse is magically filled with twenty-four hours of the unmanufactured tissue of the universe of your life! It is yours It is the most precious of possessions. A highly singular commodity, showered upon you in a manner as singular as the commodity itself! ¹

It is doubtful if anyone has ever wrapped the time concept in a neater word-package Yet it tells us nothing that we do not already know Rather, it serves to reveal our ignorance about the nature of this commodity that is the "raw material of everything"

For many years after reading this paragraph the challenge of

¹ Bennett, Arnold, *How to Live on 24 Hours a Day* Copyright 1910 by Doubleday & Co., Inc., New York Reprinted by permission

its opening sentences haunted me "Philosophers have explained space They have not explained time"

Without presuming to pose as a philosopher, fifteen years ago I embarked on a one-man study of the nature of time and its effective use. For I realized that, as with every person engaged in business or the professions, my progress and my income were dependent on the wisest possible use of my time.

In the intervening years I have closely observed the time-use habits of business executives, housewives, skilled mechanics, bankers, teachers, doctors, day laborers, writers, research scientists, merchants, farmers, editors, advertising men, salesmen, statesmen, and children.

Some of the people I studied were using their daily twenty-four-hour allotment of time to excellent advantage, others were wasting their time prodigally. I kept asking myself, "Why the great difference?"



Year after year I observed and made notes; read the biographies of the world's great and made notes, experimented with the use of my own time and made notes; talked with literally hundreds of men and women about their time-use habits and made notes of the conversations.

What I learned about the nature of time, and the variety of ideas and methods I accumulated for getting more out of life by intelligent time-use, gradually evolved into the present book. It is a sort of Swedish smorgasbord of time-concepts and time-use methods, to which the reader is cordially invited

Just as the diner at a smorgasbord takes his (or her) plate and, passing along the table spread with an impressive variety of dishes, helps himself only to those which appeal to him, so the reader should plan to help himself only to the ideas and methods presented in these pages which promise to aid him in working more efficiently and getting more out of life.

Early in my explorations I discovered that corporation presi-

dents can borrow time-use ideas from housewives, and vice versa, that farmers, professional people, skilled mechanics, salesmen and private secretaries can trade time-use techniques with one another. Also, that methods which cannot be *adopted* and used "as is" can frequently be *adapted* with surprising ease by adding a personal twist.



If some of the ideas herein are repeated, it is because they seem sufficiently important to be reiterated. If some of the methods are presented in minute detail, it is because many people seem to want to know "just how." If some of the terms and explanations used are recklessly unscientific, my apologies to Science: commonly accepted terms and homely analogies have been used to explain ideas as simply and clearly as possible. If the book as a whole is informally autobiographical, it is because that seemed the simplest and least self-conscious way to share the results of this fifteen-year project.

From time to time the reader will encounter the term "specific," used as a noun. It is employed in the medical sense of "a specific remedy having a special effect in the prevention or cure of a certain disease." The surest way to use our time efficiently is to develop "specifics" for curing ourselves of bad time-use habits and developing good ones.

Finally, do not expect this book to be consistent. Life itself is full of contradictions. At best, living is an empirical art.



Such a book as this is not to be gulped, any more than one would consume a plate of smorgasbord delicacies without pausing to taste any of them. Far better to read only a few chapters at a time and begin at once to test those ideas which promise to be helpful.

The trouble with books which offer a wide variety of ideas is that too often the ideas contained in the early chapters are

smothered by those in later chapters. The reader is apt to close the book with a sensation of acute idea-indigestion. To avoid this, in the present book the reader will find, at the end of each section, a Refresher Course List in which each concept or method dealt with in that section is crystallized. As he finishes a chapter or section, he can readily check those ideas or methods which are of special interest to him. When he has finished the book, he will have a complete personal application reminder list for quick and easy reference.



As an appropriate grace before this time-smorgasbord repast, I pause to express my deep appreciation to the authors and publishers who have graciously permitted quotations from their books or periodicals, and to the many people who have so willingly shared with me their personal time-use methods and discoveries, which in turn I am happy to share with the reader.

ROBERT R. UPDEGRAFF

Scarsdale, New York

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ONE

The Greatest Gift in the World

Legend has it that a patriarch of great wisdom was asked by an inquisitive young man, "What is the greatest gift in the world?"

"The greatest gift in the world? Why that, my son," replied the patriarch without hesitation, "would be to have all the time you need. . . . But mark you, such a measure of time can be *given* to no one. Each of us must help himself to his portion and learn to use it wisely, else many of the blessings of this most precious of all gifts will be denied him."

Packed into this sage reply is a basic fact about time which we have been slow to grasp. Time carries with it no guarantee that it will serve us. *It is only made available.* It remains for us to learn how to get the most out of the passing hours, days, months, and years.

Living a successful and rewarding life is not so much a matter of carrying out great projects as of mastering the daily routine of living.

It is perhaps our most common failing that we excuse ourselves for falling short of our reasonable potentials with a lame, "I haven't the time." Yet all around us are men and women who are accomplishing two, three, a dozen times as much as we are—in the same twenty-four hours that life is allotting to us.

Why? Because they have managed to *help themselves* to all the time they need. Not all the time they would like to have, to be sure, but all the time it takes to live a truly successful life, in terms of happiness, friendships, travel, social pleasures, progress in their chosen work, income, family welfare, and useful citizenship.



One of the tragedies of human existence is that many men and women live their whole lives without ever really attracting their own attention. As a result, they get far less out of living than they should—and contribute much less to the world than they could.

The reason is that they do not put a sufficiently high value on their time. They squander it thoughtlessly, as though there were an endless supply. Too late they discover their error.

Time is not given us to *spend* but to *invest*. Knowing our own inadequacies and limitations, we are prone to underrate ourselves and hence to undervalue our time. Yet not one of us but has a modest significance in the scheme of things. We may be playing a very small part, but no one else has quite our individual combination of qualifications for our role.

This is as true of the mother whose routine is to get two children off to school in the morning and cook three meals a day for her family as it is of the chief executive who guides the destinies of an industrial empire.

Another mistake we make is that we manage our time and energy on a short-range basis. We tend to work against a back-drop of this hour, this day, this week. Whereas it is *all of life* that counts.

It is exceedingly important to save hours and minutes, yes, even seconds. But it is vastly more important that we live our years to the full, that we make sure and steady progress toward our objectives so that one day we can look back on our careers with

a sense of having thoroughly enjoyed the experience of living, and of having made a modest contribution to our times.

To begin to live more satisfying lives, and make more progress in our work, we have only to stop right now, whatever our age or our situation, and ask ourselves just what we want from life.

What do I want to *do*?

What do I want to *be*?

Where do I want to *go*?

What *income* will I need to do the things I want to do, and have the things I really need?

What do I want to *stand for* in my little corner of the world?

It will not do to try to short-cut with the all-too-human answer. "What I want is everything." None of us can have "everything" There is not time enough in the longest life for "everything" Nor is there money enough in the greatest fortune to buy "everything."

One of the reasons most of us make such poor use of our time is that we have never faced these two truths, and focused on what someone has happily characterized as "our own tremendous possibles."

The minute we have arrived at a set of reasonable answers to these specific questions, time will begin to work for us. For time is always on the side of the person with clear-cut aims. His area of "possibles" begins to expand, and he begins to make faster progress.

TWO

New Concepts of Time

As I began studying the time-use habits of the men and women around me, at first I was puzzled to understand why some of them seemed to be employing their daily quota of time so effectively, while others with an equal number of hours at their disposal seemed to be managing their time so poorly.

"Have the really effective people learned some special secret?" I kept asking myself.

Then, one night on the Merchants Limited en route from New York to Boston, I jotted down on the back of an envelope an observation that revolutionized my concept of time and started me on an entirely new thought-path:

Time has two dimensions—*hours* and *energy*. If we waste one we waste the other. If we use one wisely we enhance the value of the other.

This new concept helped to explain at least some of the advantage the successful people—the exceptional accomplisners—seemed to have over the rest of us. They used their time and energy as twin-commodities.

If we conceive energy as a dimension of time, it becomes clear that we should use our energy as carefully and as wisely as we

use our time Perhaps even more carefully, since energy is actually the limiting factor of our hours and days, and ultimately of our years. In this sense it may have a tremendous influence on our rate of progress in our work, and thus on our income.



“Are we being equally superficial with respect to other concepts of time?” I asked myself in the days that followed. And then, one morning, I found myself writing.

We say that time cannot be purchased, yet it is on sale every day in a hundred forms

We say there is no way to “make” time, yet we can—and must—make time every day.

We assume that time cannot be stored, yet there are scores of ways of storing time for future use

We are told that we cannot double the value of our time by being in two places at once, or by doing two things at once. Yet we do both quite commonly.

I began to understand what Leonardo da Vinci meant when he wrote: “Time stays long enough for those who use it.” But I found myself mentally amplifying his rather cryptic statement to read: “Time stays long enough for those who *understand its nature* and use it *intelligently*.”

The italicized words provide the key to having “all the time you need.”



Probably, the most basic mistake we make about life is in thinking of time as having a single dimension and a single value Whereas time not only has two dimensions but two values: *clock-and-calendar-value* and *use-value*.

Not only does this dual concept help to explain the true nature of time, but it serves as a tremendously helpful approach to its intelligent investment

We spend a great deal of time and thought in studying how to

invest our money profitably, but devote too little to preparing ourselves to invest our time. We are much more concerned about getting our money's worth of material things than we are about getting our time's worth out of our days. This is utterly unrealistic, for time is far more valuable than money or material possessions, it is the very stuff of life.

We can avail ourselves of all the time we need, but it becomes evident that to do so we must boldly challenge our old time-concepts and learn to use time in both of its dimensions, and also to buy it, make it, store it, double it by being in two places at once or doing two things at once—all as a matter of routine. In short, we must learn the art of *managing* our time. (Parenthetically, I predict that within a very few years colleges and business schools will offer courses in Time Management, and that these courses will be the most basically helpful of any in the curriculum.)

If we continue thoughtlessly to look upon time only as the procession of hours and minutes measured off by the clock, or as the stream of days marked off by the calendar, we will continue to fall far short of getting full value from our hours and our energy. Rather, we will go through life short-changing ourselves with every tick of the clock and every page we tear off the calendar.

THREE

We Consume Four Forms of Energy

With no apology for being unscientific—for this makes no pretense to being anything but an empirical book, addressed to the practical business of everyday living—there may be said to be four forms of energy to be reckoned with as dimensions of time.

The first is physical energy: the form of energy we expend in doing muscular work, walking, standing for long periods, playing games, exercising. We can become so tired physically that our next few hours are so greatly reduced in value or usefulness that they are best spent in rest or sleep. We have used up the energy-dimension of our time and temporarily rendered the hours-dimension virtually valueless from a productive standpoint.

The second is mental energy: the form of energy consumed in brain work, reading, writing, talking with people, sitting in conferences and meetings, struggling with problems, planning, worrying, fuming. When we become mentally exhausted the hours that follow are greatly reduced in their time-value. If we insist on using them we find ourselves working inefficiently, as would a carpenter working with very dull tools.

The third is nervous energy: the form of energy which helps to keep our physical and mental machinery in momentum. This form of energy is, to a great extent, responsible for our accom-

plishments from hour to hour and day to day, and for our forward progress as individuals over the weeks and months and years. A considerable portion of this book will be devoted to ways to conserve nervous energy, for this is one of the main keys to intelligent time-use.

The fourth is energy-of-the-spirit. This form of energy might be likened to electricity. When it flows through us it sparks our spirits, gives us a sense of buoyancy. We are confident and resourceful. We act with decision. We enjoy our work. We are alive!

Energy-of-the-spirit helps to explain genius, but it is not limited to geniuses. This powerful form of energy helps all of us. to do hard tasks easily, to put spirit into doing the most humdrum jobs, to go through the day with a spring in our step, to work long hours without weariness.

Understanding these four forms of energy, and learning to conserve and utilize them, is the first step toward the intelligent use of time. And it is a very long step indeed.

It nets down to this. we have *time*, and we have *useable time*. The key problem is to utilize our four forms of energy so wisely that we get the most use-value out of every hour of every day.

FOUR

Four Common Enemies of Time

The first and perhaps the greatest enemy of time, which many of us must fight every day of our lives, is *procrastination*. It is one of the most common human failings. But it is a habit that must be cured if we ever hope to assume control of our time and make the best use of our energy.

Whenever we put off doing something until we "have the time" we are dulling the cutting edge of our lives.

That sterling copybook maxim, "*Procrastination is the thief of time*," needs to be restated in modern form to attract our attention. Happily an anonymous writer has done this in a picturesque sentence: "The greatest stumbling block in the path of most men is not laziness or fear but a tight-skirted, low-necked, sultry-voiced, diamond-bedecked, perfume-scented vamp called Tomorrow."¹

We make bold plans—and then wait until Tomorrow to start carrying them out. We think and plan and draw mental pictures of the fine things we are *going* to do—and then put off doing them until Tomorrow. The days and weeks pass, the months slip by, but Tomorrow never arrives.

¹ *The Galcrafter*, published by The Gilbert Paper Co., Menasha, Wisconsin.

The cold, hard fact is that all of Tomorrow is not worth ten minutes of Today

We wear ourselves out, wasting both our time and our energy, carrying the load of unstarted tasks or projects which we might complete in a few hours—perhaps in a few minutes—if only we would *begin* them.

The most effective technique for overcoming this insidious habit is a two-step process as simple as it is positive in its results. It is based on the fact that procrastination is largely a matter of *indecision*.

The indecision may be due to the fact that our imaginations conjure up difficulties or obstacles that are not there at all. More often, however, we are indulging in the lazy habit of mentally picturing ourselves doing the thing with greater ease at some later time.

The first step in curing ourselves of indecision is to take a minute or two to determine just what is involved in the doing, before we postpone the chore or task. This tiny time-investment will often save us hours, even days, of the mental energy of carrying a load of unfinished business.

The second step is to say, I am going to decide right now exactly *when* I will do this thing.

This is the Decision Technique, and it is an effective specific for curing procrastination. We may decide to do it at once, which is usually the simplest and easiest course. But if we do not, then we should compel ourselves to decide. I will do this at eight o'clock this evening, or, I will do this before lunch, or, I will do this at ten o'clock tomorrow morning. Or at some other *definite time*.

It is amazing how simple it is to get at a task if we make a definite commitment to ourselves for a definite time, rather than merely promising ourselves to do it "later on" or "when I have more time."

Having set a definite time, we can then go about our other affairs with a free mind. But we must police procrastination

sternly by making ourselves stick to our bargain when that time comes. Actually, the policing is not too difficult. As an ex-procrastinator, I find that I take a grim satisfaction in making myself come through on schedule. Or, when I find myself starting to set a later time for doing something, I say to myself, "Oh bother—why not do it *now* and get it out of the way?"



A second common enemy of time is that mirage word—*sometime*. This is a fair-promise word that lulls us into thinking we are going to do things which we will never "get around to," but which hang over us and consume mental energy every time we think of them.

"Sometime-itis" is a special form of procrastination which often involves major projects or undertakings by means of which we expect to open a new chapter in our lives, or make progress along a new path.

Some people promise themselves to write a story or a book, but never get at it. Some promise themselves to embark on a special course of study, or change to a new job in a field closer to their natural interest, or take a trip abroad, or take music lessons, or join a church, or buy a home—to mention but a few of the "sometime plans" which people make so easily but so often fail to carry out.

Whenever we catch ourselves making "sometime" promises, we will do well to check ourselves with a pertinent one-word question: *When?*

The answer may be "Now" or it may be "Never." But it should not continue to be "Sometime."

In less important matters, such as capitalizing on our ideas, *action* is the most effective antidote for "sometime."

George M. Cohan, one of the great theatrical producers of yesterday, was a man who had no use for the word "sometime." He put his ideas to work *at once*. If he got the inspiration for a new song, as likely as not it would be sung in one of his shows.

that very night. Such was the story of his famous World War I song, *Over There*. The germ-idea came to him one morning. He sat right down and dashed off the words. By afternoon the song was in rehearsal. That night it was sung in his current Broadway show. It swept the world!

If the song had not "caught on," it would have been quietly buried—without tears. George M. Cohan could stand a failure, but he refused to clutter his life with plans or ideas to be carried out "sometime."



A third common enemy of time is the habit of excusing our inaction. During the course of our lives most of us waste much more time explaining why we have not yet got around to doing things than it would have taken to do them.

One summer, as an experiment, I kept count of the number of times a neighbor explained to me, and other neighbors, why he had not been able to find time to put up a birdhouse which he had purchased two seasons before but never unwrapped.

One afternoon, after listening to him for the eighteenth time devote at least five minutes to elaborate self-justification, I suggested "Let me help you put it up—right now!"

"All right," he agreed. Actually, I didn't help at all, but merely watched and timed him. To locate the package, get tools and a stepladder from the cellar, hang the birdhouse in a tree, and return the tools and stepladder to the cellar, took him just eighteen minutes!

Ridiculous, of course. But probably not a day passes in the lives of any of us that we do not spend more time explaining why we haven't done something than it would have taken us to *do* it. Every time we indulge in such explanations we are merely confessing to ourselves—and to the world at large—that we have not learned to manage our time.

Conversely, every time we substitute *action* for *explanation* and get some task behind us, we increase the value of the minutes

and hours that follow. Furthermore, we build up our self-respect, which in itself contributes importantly to more effective use of our time by giving us firmer control of our lives.



A fourth great enemy of time is *regretting*. Of all the senseless wastes of time and mental energy, regretting is probably the least excusable.

"Finish each day and be done with it," wrote Emerson. "You have done what you could. Some blunders and absurdities no doubt crept in; forget them as soon as you can. Tomorrow is a new day, begin it well and serenely, and with too high a spirit to be cumbered with your old nonsense."

There is not one of us whose life could not, if we would let it, become "cumbered with our old nonsense"

The late Cyrus H. K. Curtis believed that blunders, mistakes, regrets, and disappointments should be written off at bedtime each night so that, upon awakening, one would face a fresh page of life, clean and inviting. He compressed his philosophy into four words: "Yesterday ended last night."

One day I lunched with a man who had retired several years ago with a fortune of more than thirty million dollars. The depression that started in 1929 had wiped it out. Literally, he had been broke, and was forced to take a job with his old company, starting all over again on a modest salary.

That luncheon was one of the most stimulating experiences I have ever had. My ex-millionaire guest passed over his lost fortune with a sentence: "I enjoyed it while I had it, but I'm having such a good time today that I never even think about it." Then he plunged into his plans for the next ten years. This at an age when most men are through!

The person of mature mind knows that every day spent in regretting is a day wasted. Life cannot be lived retroactively. When an experience is passed, it is beyond recall. We can learn from it, but we cannot correct it. And even if we could, none of us is

wise enough to be sure, at the time, that the experience which upset us really is unfortunate. It may, in fact, be Good Fortune in disguise. Often when we look back on some piece of ill-fortune we see that it worked out to our advantage. So why should we ever waste any of our time or energy-of-the-spirit regretting?

One of the sanest men I know has what he calls his *Twenty-Two-Minute Rule for Forgetting*. Whenever he suffers a disappointment, big or little, or makes a mistake, he allows himself just twenty-two minutes—and I've seen him consult his wrist watch—to forget it, write it off, bury it

"We waste enough time and energy every year in senseless regretting," he declares whimsically, "to write a book or wash a whole herd of elephants!"

FIVE

Four Common Enemies of Energy

The first of the four enemies of the energy form of time is *frustration*. To be frustrated, according to the dictionary is "to fail in attainment, to be baffled, to be foiled, to be defeated."

Our frustrations burn our energy three or four times faster than it is consumed by our work. Some of them are just little annoying ones. Some are big ones that completely stymie us, sometimes for weeks or months. Some are caused by situations beyond our control. Some are caused by other people. Some are of our own making: we did not plan ahead, or we neglected to do something when we should have done it, or we bit off more than we could chew. These latter frustrations are particularly exasperating because we have only ourselves to blame, and this undermines our self-respect.

Whatever their cause, frustrations burn nervous energy at a furious rate. We chafe, we grouse, we blame other people, we recriminate ourselves, we rage at life.

The more aggravated forms of frustration consume not only our nervous energy, but our precious energy-of-the-spirit. In doing this they rob our hours and days of their time-value to a degree that I had not appreciated until I began to grasp the

dual nature of time, and began consciously to watch people manage—or fail to manage—their frustrations.



The first rule for managing frustrations is to expect a full quota of them throughout life. They are a normal and inevitable part of daily living—the sand traps in the course of life, seemingly put there by a shrewd Providence to test our skill in living. The very fact that we do expect them robs them of their power to get us down. We should say to ourselves, “Here comes a frustration. Now to be smart enough to outwit it!”

This leads to the second rule, for which we can thank that wonderful old gentleman, Charles W. Eliot, who during his life contributed so much to the growth and greatness of Harvard University. Perhaps few people encounter so varied a range of frustrations as does the head of a large university, with its myriad faculty and student problems, and its endless administrative complexities and discouragements. All these Dr. Eliot took in his stride.

In a magazine article written toward the close of his life—and Dr. Eliot died serenely at the ripe age of ninety-two—he gave what is probably the finest specific for outwitting frustrations that has ever been written:

When blocked or defeated in an enterprise I had much at heart, I always turned immediately to another field of work where progress looked possible, biding my time for a chance to resume the obstructed road.¹

An “obstructed road” may be a roadblock in the path of some major project which we have “much at heart.” Or it may be only an interruption to some minor plan or project. Even so, the frustration usually annoys us out of all proportion to the importance of the obstruction. That is the nature of frustrations: if we give in to them they magnify themselves into major annoyances or setbacks.

¹ Copyright 1914 by The Curtis Publishing Company

To turn immediately to another field where progress is possible automatically relieves the pressure on mind and spirit. The chafing ceases, the burning of nervous energy stops.

On the constructive side, making progress in another field of work not only uses our time to full advantage, but it generates a current of confidence that recharges our spirit-batteries and prepares us to resume the obstructed path with new vigor when the time comes in which fresh progress is possible.



A second common enemy of energy is *irritation*. Irritation is defined as "a state of impatience, vexation, exasperation, anger."

Sometimes irritation arises out of frustration, sometimes it is from an external cause. Whatever its origin, irritation burns nervous energy at a prodigious rate, and reduces the use-value of our minutes and hours proportionately.

A brief flash of impatience, exasperation, or even anger is sometimes highly beneficial in that it stirs us to decision or action. But indulged in for any protracted period, irritation becomes an arch enemy of both our energy and hours.

An important part of our preparation for efficient living is to learn to ignore the irritations that beset all of us daily. William James put it well when he wrote "The great thing then, in all education, is to make our nervous system our ally instead of our enemy." When we train ourselves to ignore irritations, we are on the way to making our nervous system our ally.

The unfortunate thing about irritations is that the little ones often consume as much nervous energy as the big ones. The nervous system does not recognize the *form* or *size* of an irritation, it reacts to all forms and sizes indiscriminately.

As I have watched myself and my friends and business associates, I have discovered that nearly all of us repeatedly sin against our nervous systems by permitting ourselves to be intensely irritated by petty situations. What is worse, we often seem actually to enjoy indulging ourselves in a sense of irritation.

One day my neighbor fumed for half an hour over having broken an inexpensive garden tool

"Cheer up," I ventured across the back fence, "you can buy a brand new one for seventy-five cents."

"But I don't want to cheer up—yet," he retorted with a sheepish grin.

Very human, but also inexcusably juvenile.

If, whenever we begin to experience a sense of irritation, we were to "measure it for size" and ask ourselves just how much nervous energy the irritation is worth, we would soon find ourselves learning to ignore irritations and get on with our affairs.



A third common enemy of energy is *impatience*. We pace up and down. We fret inwardly. We fume. We rail at the people or events that are holding us up. Sometimes we explode. In doing this we consume both mental and nervous energy, and often energy-of-the-spirit as well, at a terrific rate.

Keeping busy at something—almost anything—is a simple and effective antidote for impatience. It not only neutralizes the poison of the irritation, but we use our time productively while waiting

The story is told of John Sargent, the famous painter, that when he and a party of friends were traveling one hot day in Italy they missed a train connection at a junction. It meant hours of waiting in the insufferable heat for another train.

The rest of the party fumed impatiently, and succeeded only in suffering more intensely from the heat and the delay. But not Sargent. As soon as it was established that there would be a long wait he unpacked his paints and set up his easel. In spite of the terrible heat, he produced one of his most brilliant studies, taking as his subject some white oxen standing close by the railroad station. He literally turned energy-wasting impatience into a masterpiece!



A fourth common enemy of energy is *worry*. This is the worst enemy of all because it is malignant. It grows and spreads and poisons all four forms of our energy.

So important is this enemy of mind and spirit that a separate chapter will be devoted to it in a later section of this book.

SIX

How You Can Buy Time

Closely watching myself and my fellow humans use our allotted twenty-four-hours-a-day over the past fifteen years, the conviction has been borne in on me that we have not really grasped the nature of time. We have never taken the clock apart to see how it ticks.

To do this we must begin to challenge the familiar concepts of time on which we have been brought up. For example, an ancient Chinese proverb reads, "An inch of gold will not buy an inch of time." This may have been true of life in ancient China. It is not true of life in the Twentieth Century. Today time is one of the most purchasable of commodities. All of us buy time, in one form or another, every day. By giving conscious thought to the matter, and watching our opportunities, we could buy a great deal more time than we do.

Time can be bought in an infinite variety of forms. For example, whenever we reach for the telephone to put in a long-distance call we are buying time. Telephoning is faster than writing or dictating a letter, and, since it is two-way communication, matters can be settled in minutes which might have involved days of waiting for a reply, during which our plans would have been held in abeyance. What is more, when we purchase time by using the telephone, we do so for a relatively small cost.

Recently I was planning a trip that would require two days of travel and deprive me of a night's sleep at home. "Can't I *buy* that time?" I asked myself. The trip called for getting together with two men whose offices were in the same city. "If I were to go to see these two men separately, or get them together for lunch," I asked myself, "what would I accomplish that I could not take care of over the telephone?"

Reaching for my pencil, I carefully organized my problem on paper, jotting down the things I needed to know about the situation at hand, and listing the various possible courses of action. This took about twenty minutes. Then I put in a telephone call to one of the men. In a conversation lasting just sixteen minutes his part in the matter was settled. Then I called the other man and outlined my conversation with the first man. It took only twelve minutes for us to agree on how the situation should be handled. Whereupon I called the first man again and obtained his agreement.

When I hung up the telephone after these three long-distance calls I realized that for less than twenty-five dollars I had bought two days and a night of precious time, to say nothing of an incalculable number of units of physical and nervous energy. The two days saved were extremely valuable to me in my business, and having an unexpected evening at home enabled me to finish an enjoyable book. Added to this, I had saved the cost of the trip, which would have been several times the cost of the telephone bill.

It is truly surprising how often you can buy time from the telephone company. Even local calls can frequently buy hours of time that would otherwise be spent in making personal calls or doing errands.

A New York woman told me recently that before she goes shopping for household furnishings or equipment, she first telephones the stores she normally patronizes and asks if they have in stock the particular items she wants and the price. "You have no idea how often that narrows down to a one-store shopping

trip what otherwise might have involved visiting three or four stores," she told me.



Every time we mail a letter or a parcel we are buying time. The postal service is taking over for a few cents an errand which would take hours, or even days, if we had to attend to it personally. I have read that for the price we pay for a postage stamp we hire nineteen different postal workers. Their services begin with the man who takes our letter out of the mail box into which we have dropped it, and end with the carrier who delivers it to the addressee.

We buy both time and energy when, arriving in a city where we need mobility, we rent a car from one of the drive-it-yourself agencies to cover our engagements.

We buy time when we take a taxi to go any considerable distance, or when we send a telegram, or use a theatre ticket broker.

We buy time (in the form of freedom from irritation, and often in minutes as well) when we have tools sharpened or equipment put in condition so we can work efficiently.

We buy time when we hire someone to do many kinds of chores for us. Indeed, whenever we stubbornly insist on doing something ourselves that we could hire someone to do for us at reasonable cost, we are overlooking an opportunity to buy time. The "do-it-yourself" fad is admirable, provided the things we do for ourselves provide pleasurable recreation, or represent a really substantial saving in money. But if we hire someone who is especially skilled to do things for us which we do not enjoy doing or which we are not experienced or proficient at, we will have more time for do-it-yourself activities that interest and refresh us, or for other personal activities that are important to our happiness or progress.



Whenever we purchase a copy of *The Reader's Digest* we buy a package of time. A group of gifted editors has so skillfully

condensed current magazine articles and books that we can acquire in a very short time information, knowledge, and entertainment that would otherwise consume a great many hours of reading time. Not that we need deny ourselves the pleasure of reading other magazines or books. As a matter of fact, by keeping current with the timely articles and book condensations *The Reader's Digest* publishes, we buy time which we can devote to stories and articles of special interest to us in other magazines, and to reading books.



When a housewife buys a package of one of the many types of baking mixes, instant beverages, "minute" products, or ready-to-heat-and-eat frozen dishes or meals that are to be found on the shelves of modern supermarkets, she is buying time, and usually at a bargain.

On a trip to Germany, Charles G. Mortimer, President of General Foods Corporation, studied the meal-preparation methods of the housewives of that country. He learned that the average German woman spends nearly six hours a day in her kitchen preparing the meals for her family. In the United States the average woman spends approximately one hour and a half at this occupation. There is, of course, a difference in their menus. "But," says Mr. Mortimer, "in my opinion nobody will ever sell American women on going back to the time-consuming drudgery of starting from scratch to prepare the day's meals for her family. She can buy hours too cheaply."

Not only does the American housewife buy time in the form of convenience foods, but also in the form of laundry and cleaning products that work fast, to say nothing of the all-but-human housekeeping appliances that save her so much time and labor. The accumulated minutes and hours she buys in these many forms can be devoted to her family, to social pastimes and sports, to reading, and to community activities that will broaden her life and make her a more effective person.

Time may be bought in many little forms. For example, a friend with whom I had once discussed the possibilities of buying time writes "I have just spent \$3.25 for time in the form of insurance against irritation. For years our whole family has had to arrange to leave keys in very unsafe places outside the door, or to remember to transfer keys to each other. Yesterday I became really irritated when one of the two keys to our front door got lost. So I took the keys to our front and back doors, our garage, and our two cars to a hardware store and had several duplicates made for each of them. Now, for the first time, we have enough keys! I should have done this many years ago."

When we buy a book that tells us how to do something or make something that is new to our experience, we are buying time that we might otherwise spend in trial-and-error. It is related of Thomas Edison that, though a born experimenter, before he started on a series of experiments he consulted scientific books and journals to get the fullest possible advantage of accumulated experience. He used to say, "I start where the last man left off." Thus he bought all the time he could before invading a new field.

In business and the professions, and in all the arts and sciences, there are journals and books that will enable us to "start where the last man left off." If we avail ourselves of their experience we may buy ourselves weeks and months of valuable time, and usually at small cost in money.



At one point in my own career it was important for me to become familiar, in a broad way, with the advances being made in the fields of architectural design and building construction. How could I possibly find the time to visit a number of cities that were particularly advanced in the architecture of their office buildings, apartment houses, public buildings, retail stores, schools, churches, and homes? Even over a considerable period of months this would call for more time than I could spare.

I told myself that there must be some way to *buy* that time. There was. I subscribed to *Architectural Forum* for two years. Each month I scanned its pages, studying the pictures and plans of buildings of all kinds I dipped into some of the articles, read some of the editorials, and explored the advertising pages in search of trends in building materials and construction methods.

In one evening a month I acquired an over-view of just about everything that was happening in the fields of architecture and building construction, not only in this country but all over the world. A two-year subscription costing \$8 50 bought for me all the time and energy I needed for this undertaking. As an extra dividend on my \$8 50 investment, I found myself understanding and appreciating modern architecture. My horizon had been broadened and I felt that I was up with the times and living life more fully.



Businessmen buy time when they employ specialists, contract for useful services, or buy time-saving office equipment. One day I was conferring with the president of a large corporation. He had a three-page letter which he wanted to go over with me paragraph by paragraph.

"If you could have another copy of this letter typed it would save us much time," I observed.

"I can do better than that," he said, ringing for his secretary. "Please have a copy of this letter made on our new Miracle Machine," he requested.

In two minutes she returned with duplicate copies of the three typewritten pages. A newly acquired time-saving reproducing machine, with which I was not then familiar, had been added to the equipment of this busy executive's office.

With the development of electronics the business world is on the verge of a veritable time-revolution in the office. Machines are being perfected which will do in minutes things that now consume hours, even days.

A machinery manufacturer advertises. "Beware the competitor who buys new machines" Such a competitor is buying time that may give him a considerable advantage.

With office hours growing shorter and shorter, it behooves every businessman to ask himself, every business day, whether there are not other ways he might be buying time for himself as an executive. And in what other forms he might be buying time for his business

As someone has well said, "The most valuable thing in business is a minute" Yet there is a tendency to stick stubbornly to time-consuming equipment and methods when a little investigation might reveal that a great deal of valuable time could be bought with a comparatively small dollar investment.



Increasingly, business firms are buying time in the form of private airplanes to fly their executives to their widely scattered plants and sales offices, some of which are in communities far off the beaten track.

A large canning company with packing plants located on lakes in remote rural sections accessible only by road, operates a sea-plane which can land on the water right at the plant site. Previously company executives had been obliged to take long, physically exhausting overnight train or automobile trips to visit these plants. Using the company plane, an executive of this company can leave home in the morning, visit at least two remote plants in one day, and sleep at home that night.

This is a good example of buying time in both dimensions—hours and energy—for the wear and tear of plant visits in the old days had consumed physical and nervous energy at a terrific rate.

"It used to take me a day to get over a visit to just one of our more inaccessible plants," says this company's operating vice-president. "Now I can decide in the morning to visit a plant, be at the local airport in forty-five minutes, take off in time to have

lunch and spend a couple of hours at the plant, and be back home for dinner. What's more, I get in a lot of work on the trip. I can concentrate much better than at the office, for I know I will not be interrupted. I used to dread my plant visits for days in advance. Now I rather look forward to them."

Truly this is doing business "on the wings of time"



Most of us, whether we keep house, manage a business, or engage in an art or profession, could profitably go shopping for time. It is on sale in department stores, office equipment establishments, home furnishing stores, variety stores, stationery stores, hardware stores, and supermarkets.

If we would train ourselves to look around us whenever we are in any kind of store, to see if there may not be some device, product, or piece of equipment, old or new, that would over a relatively short period save more than its cost in time, we would probably be surprised at the many forms in which this most precious of commodities is readily purchasable. Not to take advantage of them is to live and work with inexcusable inefficiency.

In the field of services, too, there are many individuals and organizations ready to sell us time, by doing for us things to which we are presently devoting a needless amount of our all-too-limited time and energy. If for a week or two we were to analyze everything we do and ask ourselves whether we might not buy, from some person or some service organization, a part or all of the time we are devoting to this segment of our work, we would probably be astonished at the time-buying opportunities we are overlooking.

SEVEN

How You Can Make Time

"You will never *find* time for anything. If you want time you must *make* it," wrote Charles Buxton.

We make time when we save time. Whether we conserve it through wise planning, taking short cuts, or using especially efficient methods or procedures, every unit of time we save, whether it be a minute, an hour, a day, or a week, is made useable for some other purpose. We have *made* it because we have added it to our personal time-span. On the other hand, whenever we waste time we are literally wasting ourselves.

This is particularly true of the wise use of what someone has picturesquely characterized as "the little shreds and patches of time"—the tidbits in between engagements, or while waiting for meals or trains or planes or buses. We are *making* time just as truly as though we were setting the clock back for that particular period and adding extra minutes or hours to our day's quota of time.

In the course of an ordinary week most of us thoughtlessly throw away enough of these small tag-ends of time to total at least three or four hours of accomplishment for the week, and often a great deal more. The trick in making them serve us is to be *prepared* to use them. We all know, for instance, that

throughout life we will have to wait on many occasions. Knowing this, we should plan ways to utilize our waiting minutes and hours in a manner that will produce enjoyment or progress, rather than impatience and irritation. When we do this we conserve our nervous energy as well as our time.



How can one be prepared to make use of such odd bits of time?

One way is to have a particular type of thinking to do: perhaps a problem that faces us in our business or our family or personal life which cannot be resolved easily but will require "mulling over."

Faced with a brief interval of waiting when we can do nothing else, we can automatically shift our minds into gear on this special problem, not in worrisome fashion but in a matter-of-fact review of the problem, and a consideration of all the possible angles. Sometimes a solution will come to us in a flash during one of these intervals. There is a psychological reason for this. As we shall see in a later chapter, our subconscious minds are always working on our problems. When we suddenly focus on one of them in an otherwise unoccupied moment, the answer will often come to us.



A businessman who has to make many speeches frequently devotes his stray minutes to thinking up ideas, anecdotes, or analogies for use in the speech he is working on at the time. He claims that it is easier for him to get fresh ideas when he is away from his desk than in his normal work-setting. "Since they are usually the most important parts of my speeches," he says, "using my spare minutes for this purpose is a wonderfully productive investment."

A doctor tells me that he always has a list of half a dozen problem-patients on his mind, and when he has a few free min-

utes he concentrates on one of them. "I find that every once in a while I surprise myself by coming up with a diagnosis which I would not have thought of at the patient's bedside," he testified.

A schoolteacher uses such increments of time to "preview" her next day's lessons and get them organized in her mind.

A man who loves poetry devotes stray minutes to reciting poems to himself to pass the time pleasantly, instead of chafing at his forced inactivity.

A college girl reports that whenever she has a few minutes to spare she repeats something which she has to memorize.

A housewife who does considerable entertaining, and has a reputation for the originality of her parties, once told me her secret. "Whenever I have a few minutes away from home with nothing else to do, I concentrate on planning my next party. I find that I can think more imaginatively at such times, for my mind is free of the routine of the day."



The editor of a business paper uses a unique system. His secretary clips many news items for his attention. To read these clippings at his desk would use too much valuable time, and he was reluctant to take such chores home as he wanted to relax completely after hours. One day he slipped a batch of clippings into his right coat pocket as he was hurrying out to keep an appointment. He had to wait fifteen minutes for his man. While waiting he started to read the clippings and make notes on those he wanted to use. As he disposed of a clipping he put it in his left coat pocket. During that fifteen-minute wait he reviewed the whole pocketful of clippings. This two-pocket system worked so well that he has used it ever since.

Each of us might profitably develop a personal specific for using our tidbits of time that we can automatically resort to whenever we have a few spare minutes. In doing so we will be literally *making* time for ourselves. Better yet, we will be employ-

ing ourselves with a sense of definite accomplishment, instead of chafing inwardly and consuming valuable nervous energy.



Most of the foregoing examples involve "making" minutes of time. We can also make hours, even days

The president of a small college tells me that he makes a great deal of time for himself with a simple set of questions "Before I undertake a task which will consume several hours, I ask myself, 'Is it really necessary that I do this, or am I merely following a traditional routine?' Often I conclude that it is not necessary, that I am merely rutted. So I turn to a really important matter.

"As for projects that will involve a day or more of my time, or a trip away from home," he says, "I ask myself, 'Is the project I am about to undertake really essential to the present success or future progress of this college?' If it is, I proceed. But I have been surprised to find how many time-consuming undertakings shrink in importance when thus sharply challenged. Every once in a while, usually to my surprise, I have to answer in the negative. Whereupon I save a day or two of time, and sometimes a week or more. I heartily agree with your premise that when we *save* time we *make* time."

Let me say parenthetically that this conversation awakened me to the possibilities of making hours and days of time for myself. Frequently I stop short as I am about to embark on some project and ask myself whether this undertaking is really going to be worth all the time it is sure to take. My experience has paralleled that of my college president friend. Every so often I have to admit that the project I am contemplating does not give that promise. I therefore abandon it, thus making a considerable amount of time for some more profitable or pleasurable enterprise.



One man who has mastered the use of time as have few persons of my acquaintance has a test question which he asks himself every few days *What will I wish a month, a year, or five years from now that I had done today?*

Frequently the answer to this question will make really important blocks of time by avoiding time-consuming mistakes and by preparing us quickly to take advantage of situations and opportunities that would have consumed a very considerable amount of our time had we not been so well prepared.

When we boldly bring to a halt a project that is using our time unprofitably, we make this time available for future use. Or, when we decide against undertaking a project that we can foresee will require more of our time than we can well afford to devote to it, we are making time for more profitable use later.

Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote "Money is of no value, it cannot spend itself. All depends upon the skill of the spender." The same is true of time. We cannot control the *length* of our days or our hours, but we can control the *use* we make of them. Whenever by taking thought we save ourselves from unprofitable expenditures of time, we actually make a corresponding amount of time for worth-while use for other purposes.

Finally, in weighing any major investment of our time, we may well ask ourselves bluntly "Would the same amount of time used for some other purpose result in greater progress toward my goal, or give me more satisfaction or happiness?"

"Time is the one commodity of which each of us receives the same amount each day," says one writer. It is, unless, by taking thought, we *make* extra minutes or hours or days for ourselves. This we should study to do as one of our routine habits-of-living.

EIGHT

How You Can Store Time

Time is the most perishable commodity in the world, yet it is perfectly possible to *store* it.

The fact is, we store time from early childhood, for the whole process of education is one of storing time. In youth, when our time does not have great value, we store knowledge for later use.

In school and college we learn basic principles, philosophical truths, mathematical formulae, methods, facts, dates, figures, and no end of short cuts that will conserve hours of our time throughout life. We learn where to look for quick answers to questions and for special knowledge that is available to meet the problems of our business or calling. We learn, also, how to concentrate, how to reason, how to think.

All this knowledge represents stored time as truly as if we had wrapped packages of it—some little, some big—and placed them on the shelves of our minds, ready to be opened and used when needed. Many of them will double, triple, quadruple the use-value of our time later in life.

This concept of education as a process of storing time should be understood by every high school and college student. It will make their education more meaningful and give greater point

to their studying and their examinations. Getting an education is not a matter of satisfying their teachers or professors, or of passing examinations, it is a matter of storing knowledge that will be useful to them, in one way or another, all their lives. Much of it will be useable "as is." Some of it will serve as a method of approach to problems, a background of understanding, or a passkey to circles of influential people.

To think of education as storing time for later use, rather than as cramming for examinations, puts it in true perspective and makes all the digging and concentration thoroughly worth while.

There is, of course, no reason why this storing process should end with graduation. Each of us can and should keep on storing up time in this sense all our lives, by cultivating the habit of mentally digesting and filing away what we read, hear, and observe.

Is this not the essence of "adult education": not merely to take up new subjects or learn new lessons as we grow older, but to train ourselves to look upon life as a continuing process of storing knowledge, ideas, and philosophy, and of constantly looking for ways to use this store in our work and our home and community life?



Another practical way to store time is to develop the habit of making notes of ideas, facts, figures, and bits of information which we may later have occasion to use.

Following are some paragraphs from an article published several years ago on the profitable practice of making notes, which impinge on the present discussion.

Most of us do not take our own ideas and mental observations and speculations seriously enough. Were we to make it our invariable habit to jot them down, we should accomplish four things: (1) give our ideas a concreteness which they lack when not formulated in writing, (2) test their soundness, in our own minds at least, (3) increase the possibility of their being used, for ideas

set down on paper tease for action, (4) register them definitely in our subconscious minds, where embryonic ideas sometimes sleep for months or years, finally to germinate into finished and useful form.

The notes we make may have to do with new plans or projects applying to our business or professional work or our home activities, with better ways of doing things, with new machines or appliances, with observations that help us to understand life better and get along more easily and happily with other people, with new conceptions worth making part of ourselves.

In the course of his life the average man, even though not particularly imaginative, probably conceives enough sensible ideas to make him considerably more valuable to the world, and to himself and his family. But he lets them go over the dam for the lack, not of a pencil and a slip of paper, but of the simple habit of making notes ¹

Note-making is an easy and effective way of storing time. Furthermore, once we have made a note of anything we want to remember, our minds are free to turn to other matters.



Time can be stored by keeping a reference file of names, addresses, telephone numbers, birthdays and anniversaries, dates of instalment and interest payments, etc.

A file tray or drawer accommodating 3x5 or 4x6 index cards, a set of alphabetical guide cards, and a set of month-and-day finder cards to keep things by date, will store an unbelievable amount of time.

A woman who used to spend much time and mental energy looking up dates, addresses, and other types of information which were scattered over her house on cards, slips of paper, or in notebooks (which she could never find!) bought herself a card file for \$2.50. She writes, "Not only does my little card file save me a great deal of time and annoyance, but I find that having

¹ Updegraff, Robert R., *Make a Note of It* Published originally in *The Rotarian* in January, 1939, and condensed in the January, 1939, issue of *The Reader's Digest* Copyright 1938 by The Reader's Digest Assn

the information neatly organized has given me a sense of control over my affairs that I have never had before. This is an extra dividend I had not counted on."

Any little thing any of us can do to give us a sense of control over our affairs is an exceedingly profitable investment.



Many business and professional people who as a matter of course maintain efficient files in their offices are surprisingly unorganized at home. Their personal correspondence, memos, private papers, receipted bills, etc., are scattered all over the house. At any stationery store they could get, for a few dollars, a home filing system that would organize their personal affairs on an efficient basis.

One of my neighbors worked out this set of filing jackets, which he keeps in the large lower drawer of his library desk.

- Automobile Records
- Bills and Instalments Payable
- Children's Records
- Clippings
- Club Matters
- Household Equipment Literature & Guarantees
- Hospitalization Papers
- Insurance
- Mortgage Information
- Neighborhood Association Matters
- Service Contracts
- Taxes
- Vacation Literature and Plans
- Waiting Matters

In another drawer he has a home correspondence file, arranged alphabetically, in which the personal correspondence he wants to keep at home is organized for easy reference.

With these two files he stores time and avoids much irritation. Furthermore, his wife can easily find any needed papers when he is not at home. Recently he started a file for each of

his children in which they can file papers they want to keep. Early in life they are learning to store time.



To keep simple records in connection with the routine of our lives is also to store time

When we begin to close up our summer place in New Hampshire each fall, I make two records. One is a list of the things to be brought up the following summer—clothing, medicines, toilet articles, tools, stationery and office supplies, etc. The other is a list of the things which need *not* be brought up. Oddly enough, the second list has been particularly helpful. In the spring when I look over the first list in preparation for packing for another season at the farm, I often wonder whether I had failed to note the need of such-and-such an article. The not-needed list immediately reassures me that I had not forgotten.

The packing-up process, which used to be a time-consuming chore, and usually resulted in my taking things not needed and failing to take things very much needed, is now simple, easy, and free from annoying oversights.

Arriving at the farm, I am helped by still another set of routine notes which I had left the season before—notes telling me just where I put various things when we closed the place. I never have to spend time looking for anything or trying to remember where I had left this or that.



Ideas are a form of time, in the sense that they frequently accelerate our progress—move us weeks or months ahead in our work and increase our earning capacity. Business or professional people, in particular, should make it a habit to store their ideas, for ideas are highly perishable.

H. G. Wells was one of the Twentieth Century's most prolific writers. It is said he never let an idea slip away from him. If a

thought occurred to him while he was in bed he reached for a nearby pad and jotted it down.

A wonderful memory is a great blessing, but even the best of memories seldom retains an idea in the clear-cut form in which it originally presents itself. To make a note of it promptly crystallizes it and stores it for use.

A writer recently told me of an article he had written for one of the national magazines which had its beginning with a single sentence he had jotted down at bedtime one night, and then promptly forgotten. Three days later, while working in his garden the title and complete outline of the article popped into his mind. He took off his gloves, got a pad and pencil, sat down on his porch and started to write. Four hours later the article was finished.

"It was the easiest and fastest job of writing I had ever done," he declared. "It certainly sold me on making notes!"

Writers are not the only ones who can profitably make notes that may mature into time-saving accomplishment at a later hour or day. Business executives, teachers, professional men and women, scientists, students, merchants, farmers—all develop ideas about their work and their personal plans and problems. If they make notes of them when they first come to mind, they will be storing progress-time.



There are many other ways to store time. For example, years ago an advertising man with a reputation for his shrewd understanding of human nature acquired the habit of studying people when he had to wait in hotel lobbies, railroad stations, airline terminals, and even on street corners.

"It is amazing," he declares, "how much you can learn about people from watching their faces and gestures when they meet or part from friends. Or when shopping. Or when disciplining their children. We don't have to read books to learn about human nature. It is an open book which we can read merely by looking

around us and asking ourselves, "Why do they do what they are doing?"

Thus this man uses spare minutes to store knowledge about human nature that is invaluable to him in his work.



The purchasing agent for a large company maintains what he calls his Reserve Stock Shelf in a cupboard at home. On this shelf he keeps a "spare" of just about every small item he uses. He showed me his inventory one day. It read:

Tooth brush, tube of tooth paste, spool of dental floss, package of razor blades, bottle of shaving lotion, pocket comb, nail file, packet of three handkerchiefs, a pair each of three colors of socks, pair of garters, box of leads for automatic pencil, refill for ball point pen, two pairs each of tan and black shoelaces, bottle of hair tonic, pairs of two sizes of flashlight batteries, sunglasses, carton of cigarettes.

"I used to become irritated when I ran out of any of these items," this man told me. "Then, one day, I asked myself why I didn't maintain a 'reserve stock,' just as we do of supplies at the plant. Now when I run out of one of these articles, or it wears out, or I lose it, instead of having to do without temporarily, or having to go out of my way—usually at an inconvenient time—to shop for it (or bother my wife to get it for me) I have only to go to my Reserve Stock Shelf. Then, at my convenience, I replace it."

In reality, this man maintains a Time-Storing Shelf.



For many years I have stored time on a strip of very thin bond paper measuring 4x8 inches which I carry in my wallet. On this slip (typed on both sides) are the addresses and telephone numbers of clients, friends, and relatives scattered over several states; also of emergency services, police and fire departments,

etc. There are thirty-four names in all. Twice a year this list is revised, with appropriate additions, deletions, or corrections.

Clipped to this folded strip of paper is a Bell Telephone Credit Card. With this card I can call any telephone in the Bell System, from wherever I happen to be, simply by giving my credit card number, and the call will be charged on my monthly bill.

This combination is my own private telephone directory and charge-it service. It has saved me untold time and no end of annoyance over the years, especially when traveling.



Still another way of storing time is to make brief notes after meetings, conferences, or important conversations, of just what was discussed and what decisions were arrived at, while the details are fresh. Accurate information will then be available when the time comes for action. Meanwhile if there is need to check on details or, even more importantly, if there is disagreement on conclusions or decisions, as there sometimes is, the notes save time, argument, and misunderstanding.

The president of a large corporation makes it his habit to dictate such notes into a recording machine immediately after every conference of any importance. "Usually it takes only three or four minutes, and it has saved me more time than any other habit of my business life," he declares. "It is a constant source of amazement to me how quickly people forget the details of a conference and even what decisions were arrived at."

To quote from the *Monthly Letter* published by the Royal Bank of Canada, one of the great mistakes of any contemporary generation is that it does not "read the minutes of the last meeting. . . . It starts its course with the handicap of having to learn all over again in practice what it could readily have learned from the records of its ancestors."

Recorded experience becomes stored time, if we read and use its lessons. In this sense our public libraries, as well as our scientific and business libraries, are storehouses of time, freely avail-

able to us. When we barge ahead in our ignorance on plans or projects which have been attempted by other men, we are turning our backs on stored time. On the other hand, when, like Thomas Edison, we consult the experience of others and start where they left off, we are using our time intelligently by profiting from what they learned and stored for our use.

NINE

How You Can Do Two Things at Once

Almost every hour of every day each of us disproves the thoughtless statement that we cannot gain time by doing two things at once

All our lives we use our minds and our hands for separate purposes at the same time We dress and listen to a morning newscast simultaneously, and arrive at the breakfast table well posted on what has happened all over the world during the night. Or, while we undress at night we enjoy programs sent out on the air waves for our listening pleasure, and climb into bed having made double use of fifteen or twenty minutes

A colorful paragraph from a local newspaper neatly pictures the possibilities of working with the hands and the mind at the same time "A woman may turn her thoughts to anything she pleases over the foaming suds of a dishpan She may compose a poem while doing the family ironing A dustcloth in her hand is helpless to keep a woman's thoughts on dust and dirt She could just as well be polishing a cloud in the bluest of skies right in her living room."¹

Perhaps our most common waste of mental energy, as well as

¹ Correctionville, Iowa, *News*

time, is the aimlessness of our thinking while doing routine or mechanical work. Why should we not focus our thoughts on a particular problem or a special plan or project we are currently interested in, while our hands are busy?

A prominent business executive writes "As a youngster I worked as a machine tender in a factory I was able to think, plan, and memorize, hour after hour, as my hands mechanically fed pieces of metal into the machine I am still using some of the ideas that came to me more than forty years ago as I carried on what on the face of it was a routine job."

If, whenever we are about to engage our hands in a task that does not involve close concentration, we were to say to ourselves, "On what particular problem, project, or plan can I profitably engage my mind while I do this?" we would find ourselves adding immeasurably to our mental productivity. Some of our most worrisome problems would resolve themselves almost automatically, and many of our plans and projects would shape up effortlessly.

By doing two things at once we literally make—and often store—time without the least drain on our physical or nervous energy, for the hands and the mind seem to enjoy working with separate assignments.



The same is true of the feet and the mind—they, too, work well together. A great scientist declares that nearly all of his best ideas have come to him while he was taking a leisurely stroll.

Hippocrates, Greek father of medicine, earnestly recommended walking for mental and physical stimulation. It is one of the most effective ways all of us can do two things at once. It is safe to say that if each of us were to spend twenty minutes a day walking, while cogitating on a particular problem, we would gain at least an hour's worth of refreshment of mind and spirit, and at the same time clear up more than an hour's worth of our prob-

lems or perplexities. Walking seems to break the bands of our frustrations and give us perspective.

We may step along briskly or we may saunter, depending on our mood. The important thing is we should not feel that we are going any place, but *taking a walk*

A friend who lives in a New York suburb makes his morning trip to the railroad station a leisurely walk instead of an energy-burning sprint. He leaves his home each morning at least ten minutes earlier than necessary to catch his train. "I just saunter," he says, "noticing the gardens along the way in the spring and summer, and the autumnal colors in the fall. In the winter I discover features of the landscape that were hidden when the trees and shrubs were in leaf. Frequently such useful ideas come to me along the way that I have to stop and make notes of them. And, nearly always, I arrive at the station with a clearly defined plan for the effective use of my day."

Not a bad return on an investment of a short morning walk!



So urgent is the need for ways to double the use-value of our hours that it may safely be predicted that many of tomorrow's profitable new services will be based on enabling us to do two things at once. So many resources for exciting living are available to us today that we are going to have to make much fuller use of our minutes and hours if we are to get all we can and should out of life.

The California Medical Association, through its Audio-Digest Foundation, has developed a two-things-at-once service for physicians who have difficulty finding time to keep current with the journals of their profession. This service is in the form of tape recordings of summaries of news items and articles from the medical journals, with a playing mechanism which the doctor can have installed in his car so that he can keep abreast of the progress of his profession while he drives.

This is an idea that may well spread to other fields of business and professional activity

Meanwhile, in our own daily living, whatever we do of a routine nature will bear special study. By taking thought we may discover a variety of things we can do simultaneously, with our ears, eyes, minds, hands, or feet, that will add to our enjoyment, education, skill, experience, or mental relaxation. Doing these things will literally double the time-value of many of our hours. A practical way to approach this problem is to pause occasionally, at home or at our work, and ask ourselves what *else* we might be doing that would not interfere with what we are already doing. Not with the aim of putting ourselves under pressure, but of using our faculties, easily and naturally.

TEN

How You Can Be in Two Places at Once

Just as we can do two things at once, so also can we be in two places at once. Indeed, with radio and television we can work this miracle almost at will. We can be at home and at the same time out in the thick of life, all over the world

One Saturday afternoon when it was too hot and humid to go any place or do anything requiring exertion, my wife and I sat comfortably in our living room and attended two exciting sports events in widely separated places by the magic of television.

At Rochester, New York, a National Open Golf Tournament was in progress and we saw the drives of all the players, and their approach shots and their putts on the various greens. During one interval we turned the dial to a telecast from Belmont Park, New York, and saw the running of a thrilling horse race. Then, back to the golf tournament in time to see the champion's final putt.

Thanks to a miracle of science, that afternoon we were actually, to all intents and purposes, in *three* places at the same time. at home, on a golf course, and at a race track. Furthermore, this was accomplished with no more expenditure of energy than turning a dial, and with no time or energy devoted to traveling.

We can if we wish, while still in bed of a morning, whisk

ourselves to such far places as London, Paris, Istanbul, Cairo, Tokyo, Moscow, Rio, or San Francisco by merely reaching out and tuning in the world news-roundup. We will know more about what has been going on overnight than the morning newspaper can tell us, for we will have been on the scene since the paper went to press. All this before breakfast!



An item in the "Topics of The Times" column, on the editorial page of *The New York Times*, points out another modern facility which makes it possible for us to be in two places at once:

"Bells Are Ringing," the new Broadway hit, memorializes in musical comedy the telephone answering service, a phenomenon that arrived on the American scene with the increasing unavailability of domestic help. The doctor out on a call, the businessman with a part-time secretary, even the housewife off to an afternoon of canasta with the girls—all depend on the efficiently cheerful voice at the end of a telephone wire to keep contact with the outside world. In a sense the phone has become our means to defy the laws of mathematics and to be in two places at the same time! ¹

The telephone answering service is an excellent example of how professional men and women, people operating small businesses, and women who engage in many outside activities and must still run their homes, can be in two places at once. They can "be there" to phone calls by proxy, while they take care of their outside responsibilities or engage in professional work or social pastimes with free minds.

This, incidentally, is buying time on a service basis. Unquestionably the future will see the introduction of many other services that will make it possible for us to be in two places at once.

Books can give wings to our minds, wherever our bodies may be, and take us just about any place on earth we would like to

¹ *The New York Times*, December 11, 1956. Reprinted with permission.

go. Or, for that matter, they can carry us as far back in the past as fancy may dictate. Or they can project us as far into the future as we care to explore. Thus we are not only able to be in two places at once, but we can also live in two eras at the same time.

The point is, of course, that today our minds can be detached from our bodies almost at will, and sent to any place or in any direction we want to go, backward, forward, upward, downward, or sideways. Thanks to science, we virtually live two lives, one physical and the other mental and spiritual.



As we progress into the Jet Age we are going to have to accustom ourselves to new concepts of place as well as time. The following statement by Donald W. Douglas, founder of Douglas Aircraft Company, published in one of that company's advertisements, foreshortens both and gives us a preview of life on our planet day after tomorrow:

One day you'll lunch in Paris . . . have dinner in Manhattan . . . or tea in London, cocktails in Boston. Or breakfast in San Francisco, lunch in Honolulu. You'll go from New York to Los Angeles in 4½ hours. New York to Chicago in 1½ hours. Be in Washington, D. C., and Louisville, Ky., at the same hour on your watch!

Time will take on a new meaning, have greater width and depth, when the DC-8 jetliner brings the jet age into your life.

It will allow you to be in two places at once. Let you race with the sun . . . and almost make it stand still. Make the most of the hours in your day . . . and give you a sense of creating new ones.

This new definition of time will make family weekends in Europe as practical and as leisurely as going off to the seashore. Lengthen your business day by *hours*. Create extra days for your vacations. Bring summer as close as 100 minutes away, even in the bitter dead of winter.

So much space. So little time. This is the essence of jet flight. The modern miracle of travel which will alter the days of your life, and the hours of your days.

Such bold predictions as this, already dwarfed by the dramatic launching of the first space satellites, makes it clearly apparent

that we are going to have to adjust ourselves to entirely new concepts of time and space. Doing two things at once and being in two places at once will, figuratively speaking at least, be commonplace day after tomorrow

Meanwhile, we ought never to lose sight of the fact that both our progress toward our objectives and our earning capacity are strictly limited by the time at our disposal. If we can work out ways to do two things at once or be two places at once, we will "make" an appreciable amount of time which can serve these two purposes.

Should we not ask ourselves at least once a day: "Am I taking all of the time-advantages presently available to me—and preparing myself for those which shortly will be available?"

Your Subconscious Mind Is a Full-Time Servant

Each of us has a willing servant who will cheerfully work for us twenty-four hours a day, without pay. And yet comparatively few of us have learned to use this servant, in spite of the fact that it has the power to just about *double* the accomplishment-value of our time.

I refer to that fantastically industrious and able silent partner, the subconscious mind, which serves us tirelessly and does much of our best mental work, yet asks no reward. Unless we learn to use its powers we are overlooking one of our most effective allies, whose contribution to our welfare and progress can be of incalculable value to us.

If we divide our day into three sections, namely, the hours we work, our hours of leisure, and the hours we spend in sleep, it becomes evident that with today's brief workweek we consciously devote less than a third of our time to work. Yet without any conscious thought on our part, our subconscious minds will do much work for us while we are engaged in other tasks, or enjoying our leisure, or sleeping.

We need to learn to use this willing servant consciously and as a matter of habit, for it will help us to solve our problems, germinate ideas for use in our work, and aid us with all our

plans and projects. Furthermore, it will serve us every hour of every day and night, seven days a week.



In a magazine article written several years ago, our mental activity was likened to the process of cooking. These paragraphs extracted from that article will serve to explain the analogy.

Consider thinking as a process of cooking. Our minds are cookers. Our conscious minds cook with fire—with mental energy, consciously applied. Our subconscious minds operate as fireless cookers.

Obviously, if we insist on cooking everything with the heat turned on, we burn up our mental energy at a fearful rate, and obviously, also, if we never put anything in the fireless-cooking part of our minds to cook, it will grow cold and unresponsive from lack of use.

The third fact, which is not so obvious until it is pointed out, is that dumping cold ideas and facts into the fireless compartment and expecting them to cook is merely filling the compartment, without much chance of cooking up solutions. The whole principle of fireless cooking is to start the food cooking with heat (i.e., with conscious thought on the problem or subject), and then leave it to finish cooking in the fireless compartment.

Who of us has not had the answer to some perplexing problem, or some idea connected with our work or our home life, come to us while dressing or shaving in the morning, or while walking or driving to work? That is the subconscious mind—the fireless cooker—reporting on something it has been cooking overnight. It has boiled over into our consciousness, done and ready for use.

Our minds should operate that way all the time, on practically all of our plans and problems, whether the cooking requires minutes or hours or days. But how few of us use our minds that way!¹



In addition to being fireless cookers, our subconscious minds are storage chambers in which are filed all the thoughts and ideas we have ever entertained, all the things we have ever heard or

¹ Updegraff, Robert R., "The Subconscious Mind in Business," *The Magazine of Business*, January, 1929

read, a record of all the experiences we have ever had. This vast wealth of stored material is available to bring to bear on our current problems and opportunities.

From time to time, as already suggested, a creative idea or the solution to a problem will boil over into our conscious minds without our giving any conscious thought to it. However, we need not depend on these accidental results. We can train ourselves to use our subconscious minds consciously, every day, on all our plans and problems—those connected with our work and our community life, and also the more personal ones involved in our home affairs and family relationships.

When we learn to do this we will have mastered the technique of conserving the precious energy of our conscious minds, which, unlike our subconscious minds, grow weary. We will also have added greatly to the creative power of our minds, for the subconscious mind is inventive. With respect to this last statement, the following paragraphs throw additional light on the creative functioning of the subconscious mind.

There are two significant facts regarding the subconscious mind that are little understood, hence are unappreciated and unused by most of us. The first is that the subconscious mind contains within itself the power to create. The second is that the subconscious mind can be made to obey the orders given to it by the conscious mind. For, unlike the conscious mind, the subconscious mind has no power of choice. By its very nature it must do what it is told to do. Its function or purpose is that of bringing to full expression whatever is desired by the higher or self-conscious aspect of the mind.

While the conscious mind is a law unto itself, deciding what it desires and determining its own destiny, the subconscious mind is impersonal and acts only in keeping with its own nature, that of serving the purposes of the conscious mind. Its content, its work, and its expression are determined, not by itself, but by that which is given to it to work on by the higher level of consciousness. It receives, retains, and creates. Nothing which has once been given by the conscious mind to the subconscious mind to

work on can be removed or expelled except by the action of the conscious mind itself.

The subconscious mind is not only a storehouse, it is an area of infinite creative activity . It is imaginative and inventive It never grows weary. It is the willing servant of the man or woman who understands it and intelligently uses his or her conscious mind to direct it.²



The longer we can give our subconscious minds the opportunity to work on a problem or plan, the better If we can possibly start several days ahead to work on a plan or organize a problem to be turned over to the subconscious mind, it is well to do so. One of the advantages of allowing all the time possible is that the things we read and hear and see stimulate our subconscious as well as our conscious minds, and often provide the idea-spark that illuminates a problem so clearly that its solution comes easily. Or, in connection with plans we may be making, some news item or advertising headline, or some chance remark of an associate, may start us along an entirely new thought-path

Following is an outline of a simple method of using the fireless cooking principle, from a letter written by a man who has used his subconscious with great success for many years:

When a problem looms ahead of me, instead of waiting until it is right upon me, I go out to meet it This I do by writing in longhand a few sentences outlining the impending problem Then I jot down any ideas I have at the time on how it might be solved, be they sensible or ridiculous. I am merely engaging my subconscious mind with the problem, and at this stage it is only important to "start the cooking" This sheet of notes I put in a drawer of my desk and dismiss the whole problem from my conscious mind

If I have several days to work on the problem, every day or so I reread my notes and ask myself if I have any new ideas to add Often I discover that I have—and usually they have come out of my subconscious mind.

² Williams, John K., *The Knack of Using Your Subconscious Mind* Quoted with permission of the publishers, Prentice-Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey

Sometimes while I am making these new notes the solution to the problem comes to me. My subconscious mind had all but completed the "cooking" process. Stirring the brew has finished it.

Of course, it doesn't *always* work. Sometimes no amount of fireless cooking or stirring will produce a solution. Then of course I have to come to grips with it with my conscious mind. But even in such instances, when I finally work out a solution, frequently I sense that it has come from way back in the recesses of my mind—probably from my subconsciousness.

In a personal conversation with this man, a high-salaried executive whose work calls for creative ideas and the solution of tough problems, he estimated that he earns at least a third of his income with his subconscious mind. "There are not hours enough in the day for all the thinking I have to do," he told me. "I simply *must* depend on my subconscious mind. I never will understand why so few men and women have learned the art of using this amazing function of their minds."

This puzzled me for a long time, too. I have come to the conclusion it is because they are too impatient, for one thing, and for another, that they do not recognize what has happened when the subconscious function does solve a problem for them, or produces an idea. They want to charge their minds at bedtime with a problem and have a wrapped package delivered to them in the morning labeled, "This came out of your subconscious."

It is not that simple or positive. While it is true that solutions to problems sometimes do seem literally to *pop* out of one's subconscious, more often they filter slowly through into the conscious mind, sometimes hours, sometimes days later. Often they seem to be the result of conscious thinking, whereas they were not, or at least the subconscious deserves about three-quarters of the credit.

The real test of whether one has successfully enlisted this willing servant is whether, as the days pass, one has the sense of being unusually productive of ideas, or of solving perplexing problems with ease, or of having a heightened feeling of per-

sonal effectiveness Then, presently, one begins, naturally and as a matter of habit, to put plans and problems "in the fireless cooker" and stop struggling with them consciously. One has finally mastered the knack!



The wonderful thing about mastering the use of the subconscious mind is that it gives one more time for reading, travel, sports, and hobbies With the most creative part of the mind busily at work on one's concerns, the conscious mind can safely take a vacation every now and then. One can loaf or play or sleep with a clear conscience. Every person who follows a hobby knows that much of his best brain work is done while his hands are busy Ideas are born Solutions to problems suggest themselves. Plans germinate This is the subconscious mind working at its best.

As someone has whimsically expressed it, the big trouble with life is that the days are not long enough and the nights are too short The intelligent use of our subconscious minds will provide any of us with a practical solution to the too-shortness of both our days and our nights. By working our silent partner, the subconscious, on the night shift we can "burn the candle at both ends" without danger of breaking under the work-load!

TWELVE

All the Time You Need

The theme as well as the title of this book is "All the Time You Need." This can be safely promised to almost any person who will develop a sound philosophy of time-use, plan his life intelligently, and use the four forms of his energy and his subconscious mind in such a way as to get full value from them. But even then, life does not issue blank checks to be filled out to "Bearer" reading, "Time enough for *everything* you want to do."

We may greatly enjoy reading books. Obviously none of us could read *all* of the thousands of new books published each year, not even all of the really worth-while ones. There is not that much time.

We may greatly enjoy reading magazines. Hundreds of weekly and monthly magazines stream from the presses, not to mention the multitude of business, professional, trade, technical, and scientific journals. Obviously none of us could read *all* these, not even all that we might very much like to read. There is not that much time.

We may greatly enjoy watching television or listening to radio programs. Hundreds of these programs bid for our attention each week. Obviously we cannot tune in *all* of them, or even all

of the programs on the round-the-clock schedule of a single station. There is not that much time

We may greatly enjoy golf or motoring or horseback riding or hiking. Millions of miles of highways, country roads, and trails beckon us. Not to mention golf courses. Obviously we cannot follow *all* of them. There is not that much time.

We may be in love with our work. Perhaps we could enjoyably devote twenty-four hours to it every day. Of course this is impossible, for we must sleep and eat and do many other things which interfere with our accomplishing everything we might like to accomplish in our business, art, or profession. There is not that much time.

Our problem is to exchange the time we have—and, again, our four forms of energy—for a truly successful and satisfying life.

We have seen that we can buy time, make time, store time; that we can double the value of some of our time by doing two things at once or being in two places at once, and that we can almost double our mental productivity by learning to use our subconscious minds.

There remains, however, one other time-concept which should be woven into our time-use philosophy. It harks back to Old Testament days, but is a spirit which we should try to recapture in our modern life. It is expressed in this paragraph.

The Israelites thought of time in terms of its *content* rather than of its length. Thus, when they spoke of harvest-time, it was of the harvest itself that they were thinking and not of a bit of the calendar about September and October. When we speak of time vaguely, and ask somebody to come and see us "before lunch" or "after the holidays," we most nearly approach the more leisurely outlook of the Old Testament world, when it didn't matter if dinner *was* kept waiting and when the arrival of a guest was likely to be long remembered as a red-letter day. Time was thus arranged round significant happenings, the Israelites were entirely free from the joint tyranny of punctuality and engagement books.¹

¹ Heaton, E. W., *Everyday Life in Old Testament Times*, p. 187. Reprinted with permission of the publishers, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York.

While this is a very old concept of time, it is refreshingly new. Certainly it is pertinent to present-day living. In today's hectic, high-pressure world, while we cannot hope to be entirely "free from the joint tyranny of punctuality and engagement books," we can approach life in terms of a more satisfying "content" of our time; and we can plan for more "red-letter days"

One of our great troubles is that we are not sufficiently *selective* in our use of our time, we try to do so many things that we get too little satisfaction from the things we do manage to "get in." There is too little "content" to our living.

We need to work out a practical personal *pattern of living* which will keep us "on the beam" day in and day out. This pattern must, if it is to serve us acceptably, help us to earn a good living and make steady progress toward our objectives, without sacrificing the fun, the friendships, the adventures, and the rewards which make up a truly happy and successful life

Section One—Refresher Check List

This section is provided for your convenience in reminding yourself of those concepts, ideas, or methods which you want to remember or act upon. In front of each is a space in which to pencil a key letter according to the following simple personal application code

R—I want to remember this and adopt it as part of my philosophy or pattern of time-use

T—I want to try this out and see if it fits my needs

A—I definitely want to take action on this idea or to adopt (or adapt) this method or technique

It will be far better to check only a few ideas and actually *use* them, than to check so many that you do nothing about any of them

A periodic review of the ideas you have coded may help you to use your time and energy much more efficiently

Chapter One

- ___ The greatest gift in the world is all the time you need—but it is only made *available* p 3
- ___ Put a higher value on your time. p 4
- ___ Work against a background of your whole lifetime. p 4
- ___ Decide what you want to *do*. p 5
- ___ Decide what you want to *be*. p 5
- ___ Decide where you want to *go*. p. 5
- ___ Decide what *income* you need p 5
- ___ Decide what you want to *stand for* p. 5

Chapter Two

- ___ Time has two dimensions—Hours and Energy p. 6
- ___ Time has clock-and-calendar-value and use-value. p 7
- ___ Time must be *managed*, an art to be learned. p 8

Chapter Three

- Learn to use your four forms of energy every day. physical, mental, nervous, and energy-of-the-spirit p. 9
- Continually differentiate between *time* and *useable time* p. 10

Chapter Four

- Time has four common enemies (1) procrastination, (2) sometime-itis, (3) condoning inaction, (4) regretting p. 11
- The cure for procrastination. p. 11
- The cure for sometime-itis. p. 13
- The cure for condoning inaction. p. 14
- "Finish each day and be done with it You have done what you could Some blunders and absurdities no doubt crept in, forget them as soon as you can. Tomorrow is a new day, begin it well and serenely, and with too high a spirit to be cumbered with your old nonsense"—EMERSON p. 15
- "Yesterday ended last night."—CYRUS H. K. CURTIS p. 15
- Life cannot be lived retroactively. p. 15
- The Twenty-Two-Minute Rule for Forgetting. p. 16

Chapter Five

- Energy has four common enemies. (1) frustration, (2) irritation, (3) impatience, (4) worry. p. 17
- "When blocked or defeated in an enterprise I had much at heart, I always turned immediately to another field of work where progress looked possible, biding my time to resume the obstructed road"—DR CHARLES W. ELIOT p. 18
- Measure your irritations "for size." p. 19
- The cure for impatience p. 20

Chapter Six

- Time can be bought in an infinite variety of forms. p. 22
- The telephone company sells time. p. 23
- The postal service sells time. p. 24
- Time is for sale at drive-it-yourself agencies. p. 24
- Taxi fares are usually bargains in time. p. 24
- Sharp tools represent purchased time. p. 24

- Unless they are pleasurable, “do-it-yourself” activities may cost more than they save. p 24
- *The Reader’s Digest* is a package of time p 24
- Convenience foods and instant beverages are time-bargains for the busy housewife p 25
- Spare keys represent purchased time p 26
- With new undertakings, “Start where the last man left off” p 26
- Time-saving office services and equipment may be profitable time-purchases p 27
- “Beware the competitor who buys new machines”, he is buying time p 28
- “The most valuable thing in business is a minute” p 28
- Businesses that maintain private planes are buying time for their executives. p 28
- Train yourself to look around, in any kind of a store, for time that may be on sale in the form of new devices, products, or equipment that will save minutes, hours, and frustrations p 29
- Keep alert to services that may represent opportunities to buy time. p 29

Chapter Seven

- “You will never *find* time for anything; you must *make* it.” p 30
- The art of using “tag-ends” of time. p 30
- Solve your problems in moments of waiting. p 31
- Speeches can be planned while waiting p 31
- Waiting time can provide perspective on problems and projects p 31
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ONE

Happiness and Your Pattern of Life

Just as time has two dimensions, so life has three aims. happiness, accomplishment, progress.

Our happiness, rather than money or position, is the true measure of our success in using our time and energy wisely, minute by minute, hour by hour, day by day, month by month, year in and year out.

A wise man wrote "Success is a journey, not a destination" To which David Dunn adds "Happiness is to be found along the way, not at the end of the road—for then the journey is over and it is too late"¹

We fall into the error of thinking of happiness as a condition by itself, which of course it is not. It is all wrapped up with our accomplishments and our progress. The test of whether we are using our time and energy wisely is how good a job we are doing each day at earning a living and providing for those dependent on us, and how much progress we are making.

Our progress might be characterized as the long-distance aspect of successful living. There is something of tomorrow in everything we do today. We are either storing up progress or we are

¹ Dunn, David, *Try Giving Yourself Away*. Reprinted with permission of the publishers, Prentice-Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey.

living and working for too small a return on our investment of time and energy

Just as in business profit is measured by whether the businessman is able to take out more money than he puts into his enterprise, so in our personal lives our profit is the margin between the time and energy we invest in living and the happiness, accomplishment, and progress we enjoy as the days, weeks, and months slip by.

Measured by this definition many people are investing a great deal of time and energy unprofitably. None of us can escape some waste of time, for if we never risk time on projects that do not "pay out," we will not live very exciting lives. Nor will we accomplish very much. But if, over the months and years, we continue to put more into life than we take out in happiness, satisfaction, and progress, something is radically wrong with the way we are using our time and energy. It is time we came to grips with life.

A good starting point is to visualize the routine of daily living as having a pattern. With most of us the pattern is something like this.

- Earning our living and supporting our dependents
- Making progress in our work
- Keeping abreast of the world
- Enjoying our family life
- Keeping in touch with our friends
- Doing our share in the community
- Making at least a modest contribution to the welfare or progress of the business, profession, art, science, trade, or calling which supports us
- Engaging in games or sports
- Travel and adventures
- Saving for the future

The complex of activities comprising this pattern makes insistent demands on our time. It is their confusing multiplicity

that complicates our lives. It is the persistent repetition of some of them that sometimes makes life seem deadly dull

If we are to exercise control over our lives, derive happiness and satisfaction from each day, and enjoy a sense of growth and progress with the passing of the months and years, we must manage our time and energy with judgment and skill. This involves fashioning a sound personal philosophy for everyday living, and working out a pattern that suits our temperaments and fits the conditions and circumstances under which we must work and live

The first and greatest philosophical truth, as already suggested, is that we can expect to find our greatest happiness along the way—not necessarily in arriving but in striving, and not in loafing but in working. In one of his books, W. Beran Wolfe says.

Nearly every human being is looking for happiness, but very few know what happiness is. Nevertheless if you observe a really happy man you will find him building a boat, writing a symphony, educating his son, growing double dahlias in his garden, or looking for dinosaur eggs in the Gobi desert. He will not be searching for happiness as if it were a collar button that has rolled under the radiator. He will not be striving for it as a goal in itself . . . He will have become aware that he is happy in the course of living life twenty-four crowded hours of the day.²

Wolfe might have added “—and making progress.” While it is important that we experience the satisfaction of accomplishing a good day’s work every day, it is equally important that we enjoy a feeling that we are “getting somewhere.” Psychologists who have studied inborn human desires have discovered the overwhelming importance of a sense of progress in even the humblest person. It is one of the most effective forms of compensation in industry. Men will often turn down better-paying jobs because they are “getting ahead fast” where they are. They feel their time is being well invested.

² Wolfe, W. Beran, *How to Be Happy Though Human*. Reprinted with permission of the publishers, Rinehart & Company, New York.

Scientists, artists and professional men and women, also, derive much of their satisfaction from a sense of making progress. It carries them through long periods of intense application. It seems to create a special form of energy-of-the-spirit which lightens their work-load.

Recently I spent an unusually strenuous day in New York City keeping a series of important engagements. By evening I should have been thoroughly tired out. But all my appointments had gone well and I arrived home with a sense of having made great progress. After dinner I felt so energetic that I sat down to begin a chapter of this book, with no thought but to write a few paragraphs. Four hours later—at midnight—I dotted the final period. The chapter finished, I went to bed not in the least weary, but actually refreshed in mind and spirit. A strong sense of progress all day long had provided a fresh supply of energy at my day's end for an evening of writing.

By contrast, to work a long day without accomplishing anything leaves any of us with a "spent" feeling. In reality we have overdrawn our energy account for that day. The use-value of the evening hours, even for pleasure, has been greatly lessened. It is not the work we do that tires us, but the work we do not get done—the unfinished tasks that hang over us.



Happiness, accomplishment, progress—these are the three factors around which our personal pattern-of-living should be organized. The intelligent and profitable use of our time is not merely a matter of employing our spare minutes advantageously, or of salvaging occasional hours that otherwise might be frittered away. To do both is important, to be sure. But the problem is much broader and deeper. To enjoy a successful career involves studying the whole pattern of our daily living—and completely redesigning it if need be—to give us firmer control over our lives.

TWO

Your Journey to Mecca

To quote again from Arnold Bennett's little classic, referred to earlier.

A man may desire to go to Mecca. His conscience tells him that he ought to go to Mecca. He fares forth, either by the aid of Cook's, or unassisted, he may probably never reach Mecca; he may drown before he gets to Port Said, he may perish ingloriously on the coast of the Red Sea, his desire may remain eternally frustrated. Unfulfilled aspiration may always trouble him. But he will not be tormented in the same way as the man who, desiring to reach Mecca, and harried by the desire to reach Mecca, never leaves Brixton. It is something to have left Brixton. Most of us have not left Brixton. We have not even taken a cab to Ludgate Circus and inquired from Cook's the price of a conducted tour. And our excuse to ourselves is that there are only twenty-four hours in the day.¹

If we are to use our time and our energy to the fullest possible advantage, long-range, each of us should have a personal Mecca. If we have not, it is high time we asked ourselves this very personal question: "Can it be that I do not know where I want to go. that I have no Mecca to give reason and purpose to my life?"

¹ Bennett, Arnold, *How to Live on 24 Hours a Day*. Copyright 1910 by Doubleday & Company, Inc., New York. Reprinted by permission.

Mecca may be a secret ambition or an announced destination. A young executive may aspire to be president of the company for which he works. A young man may visualize himself as a famous surgeon. A girl may see herself in the uniform of an international airline hostess, shuttling between the famous cities of the world.

An older man, a practicing lawyer, may aspire to a judgeship. A suburban wife and mother may picture herself as president of the local women's club and a leader in her community.

Whether young or mature—and it is never too late—it will give point and focus to all the years of our lives to have a personal Mecca. We may never reach it, but it is surprising how many people do—and then have to plan a new Mecca!

But suppose we never arrive? If we make a start we shall go farther and live more purposefully than if we “never leave Brixton.”



Usually Mecca has to be arrived at by stages. Often we can start only in the general direction and approach through two or three “suburban” Meccas.

A very ambitious young lady has as her Mecca “a home with a husband and four children, two girls and two boys.” Meanwhile, in addition to taking up cooking in a serious way, she has enrolled for a secretarial course. “I am going to be the most efficient, interested, and thoroughly satisfactory secretary in the world, to start with,” she declares, “and then let the future take care of itself.”

This makes sense, for to be a good cook and the most efficient, interested, and thoroughly satisfactory secretary in the world is the finest kind of training to be a most efficient and thoroughly successful wife and mother. She is traveling directly toward her Mecca.

This brings out an important fact about the journey to Mecca: our attitude is quite as important as our aim—more important in

some ways The selfish person, who elbows his way ruthlessly and tries to climb over everyone in his path, will find the going tougher than the considerate person who is thoughtful of others and strives to help them along the road to their Meccas.

Some years ago at a meeting of the board of directors of a nationally known company a new president was being chosen. The outstanding candidate was one of the vice-presidents, a young man of thirty-six

"But won't his older associates resent so young a man being put over them?" asked the oldest director

"No," said another board member who was closely tied in with the organization. "He is not a climber. He is a lifter. He gives a hand-up to his associates on every possible occasion."

This director's observation was true. The young man was elected president and his selection proved most fortunate. Instead of resenting him, his associates rallied around and helped him to more than double the size of the company. As a result every executive in the business has made progress, and there is a wonderful team spirit in the organization. The young president had ambitions, not merely for himself but for the company. These ambitions served as a Mecca for the entire organization.



Whatever Mecca we may set out for, we must expect to travel in stages, stopping here and there to learn, to earn, to rest, to refresh ourselves

At times we will not seem to be making much progress. But if we are putting ourselves into our work wholeheartedly, we can be pretty certain that we are moving ahead. For we will be accumulating experience and growing in wisdom. Also, we will be establishing contacts and cultivating friendships, without which we cannot expect to make rapid progress.

During these periods we should look up from our work now and then, to be sure we are still headed for Mecca, and to see if there may not be something *extra* we could be doing on the

side to further our progress. Perhaps we should be taking lessons in some subject, working out a special course in reading, taking trips, meeting people who may be helpful later, writing letters, exploring some new field in the area of our interests.

The reason many people make such slow progress is that they bury themselves in their work and never give a thought to what they may need to know or to do to ready themselves for the next stage of their progress.

In the business world the quickest way for aspiring young people to prepare themselves for their boss's job is to study each problem he faces and ask themselves, "What would I do about this problem if I were in his place?"

Not that they should volunteer advice. That might not set well. But if they have come to grips with the problem mentally, and decided what they would do about it if it were their responsibility, they will have a suggestion ready if their opinion is asked. Assuming it is not, they are in the fortunate position of being able to see what solution is attempted and how it works out, without having any personal responsibility. Usually this will show them whether their solution was sound, and, if not, why it was not. Or they may have the happy experience of seeing that their solution would have worked well, which will buttress their self-confidence.

There is no quicker or surer way for a person to prepare for the next higher job than by "trying it on for size" in this fashion, day after day.



There is no reason why the journey to Mecca should not be planned in, say, five-year stages.

One afternoon I was stopped on Forty-Second Street in New York City by an old friend whom I had not seen for at least fifteen years. He looked prosperous and I commented on the fact.

"I've done very well," he told me, "thanks to a question you asked me several years ago." I must have looked puzzled. He

explained, "One day when we were lunching together at the Advertising Club you asked me, 'Where do you want to be five years from now?' You probably forgot all about it promptly, but I did not. That question kept nagging me. I knew in my heart that I had been drifting all my life, and that it was high time I decided where I did want to be five years hence. I set a goal which seemed at the time utterly unrealistic. But I began to work toward that goal. In less than three years I had arrived, and had to set myself a new five-year goal. I've kept ahead of schedule ever since."

I had forgotten asking my friend this question, but since then I have asked it of myself as well as of many other men and women, some of them young, some fairly well along in years. It is a wonderful progress-question. It keeps one headed toward his Mecca.

There are sure to be periods when we will seem to be making no progress, even though we are working very hard. Then, suddenly, one day something happens that gives us a real lift on our way. And we need an occasional lift, for the road is long.

The surest way to get a lift is to keep plugging along under our own power, not standing at the roadside trying to thumb a ride. Several years ago, as an adventure, a young man hitch-hiked his way from coast to coast. He covered the three thousand miles in an unbelievably short time. He wrote a magazine article about the experience in which he stated that each morning he started out with his suit-case and trudged along the road, never even turning his head when a car approached from behind. But he seldom walked very far before some motorist pulled up beside him and asked, "Can't I give you a lift?"

It is apt to be the same way with life.



As already suggested, with some of us Mecca may be only a direction, not a final destination. We may change our course along the way. The young man who secretly aspires to the presi-

dency of the company for which he works may end up by starting a little business of his own. The youth who visualizes himself as a famous surgeon may discover that his special skill and talents lead him to specialize in brain surgery.

We may change direction and head for an entirely different Mecca, either because we lose interest in the old one or because an exciting new path opens up that leads to a Mecca which had not existed when we started. With the new developments in science, and in world affairs, this is bound to happen to many of us.

In my own experience, at one time I abandoned the Mecca I was heading for and set out for a new one. To a friend who expressed surprise at my change in plans I wrote a letter explaining the reasons. In reply he wrote:

"Yours is, I think, a very good example of a sound procedure most of us fail to follow—namely, to re-examine our plans periodically and change them if the circumstances call for it. I know that I have been guilty of continuing along a certain course of action which made sense at the time it was started, but did not make equal sense in the light of changed conditions."

This is not to advocate changing our course at every fork in the road, or giving up when the going gets a bit rough. It takes determination and perseverance to reach Mecca. But we should never forget that we are investing a life, and we want to be sure it is being well invested. We can command all the time we need to live *one* good life, but if we try to travel in half a dozen directions at once we are not likely to arrive at any desirable destination. Our lives will have been squandered in aimless rambling.



At first glance it may seem as though the idea of starting for a Mecca of our own choosing and the concept of life as a journey rather than a destination are contradictory. Not so. As has already been stressed, life has three aims: happiness, accomplishment,

and progress. Our happiness along the way is derived to no small extent from our accomplishments and the sense of progress we experience. We can enjoy this sense to the full only if we measure our accomplishments and progress against a long-range goal—a Mecca.

THREE

Working and Living in Projects and Episodes

It was not until my informal research into the nature and use of time was nearly ten years along that I discovered what it is that keeps most of us from getting full value out of the time and energy we invest in life. One morning the explanation came to me. *A major mistake we make about time is that we live life as a continuous stream of hours and days, rather than as a series of separate PROJECTS and EPISODES, each important in some way to our happiness, accomplishment, and progress.*

From then on it became clearly apparent, as I watched the happiest and most successful men and women of my acquaintance carrying on their affairs and living their busy lives, that in effect they were "packaging" their living in "projects" and "episodes."

My attention was first attracted to this packaging concept while watching a master craftsman in metals plan his day's work. He has a rare sense of the value of his time and energy, and is not content merely to get up to another day's work in his studio. When he awakens in the morning he says to himself, "Today I will design a very beautiful new type of plaque—or at least make a start on it." Or perhaps, "This morning I will devote to my big vase and see if I cannot complete the design for the rim."

Both of these projects are "packages" of accomplishment.

With his mind sharply focused, as soon as he has finished his breakfast he hurries eagerly to his studio and starts his creative day. His attitude toward his work is well-expressed by Shakespeare's inspiring lines.

*To business that we love we rise betime,
And go to 't with delight.*

No wonder this designer is successful! No wonder he is building an enviable reputation in his field! No wonder he is happy! He prepares his mind each morning for accomplishment and progress by plotting his time and energy in terms of a small package of progress on the special project on which he is currently working.

Does he always finish what he sets out to accomplish? Can he go to bed each night with a sense of having "tied up his package"? By no means. Like every person who tries to make something of his life, he has interruptions that throw him off schedule. He meets with delays and distractions that frustrate him. He has setbacks and failures. But because he knows exactly what he hopes to accomplish each day, he does wrap up a surprising number of project-packages.



The other person who contributed to my appreciation of the wisdom of the packaging idea is a woman who lives an intensely interesting life because she seems to live in "episodes." She approaches every experience as an adventure-in-living.

If she is going to the theatre or to a movie, she seems to draw a mental circle around the evening in a way that says, "I am about to have an interesting experience!" If she sits down to watch a television program or to read a chapter in a novel her approach is the same. "I am going to enjoy this!"

If this woman and her husband are invited to a dinner party, she looks forward to it as a Special Event. She arrives at the party in a state of high expectation. "This is going to be fun,"

her manner says. Her enthusiasm makes it a successful evening for herself and her husband, and also for the host and hostess. She is popular with a wide circle of friends because wherever she goes she has such a good time, in which everybody present shares.

To this woman life is not merely a routine. With her episode approach she reaps handsome dividends of enjoyment from her time and energy.

These two people taught me that learning to package life, in terms of accomplishment, progress, and enjoyable experiences, is the secret of developing a happy and successful *pattern of living*, made up of interwoven projects and episodes.



A project might be defined as *something definite to be accomplished*, in the sense of getting it behind us. So simple an act as getting a meal, doing an errand, making a telephone call, attending a committee meeting, dictating a business letter, or keeping a business appointment should be treated as a project.

An episode, on the other hand, is *something to be enjoyed*—a package of happiness or well-being. A bridge or golf game can be an episode, so can going fishing, lunching with a friend, reading a chapter in a book, going to the movies, taking a walk, spending an evening with one's stamp collection, going for an automobile ride, dining out.

Too often we approach our episodes in an attitude of weariness or boredom, perhaps even with a sense of dread.

"I'm too tired to go to the movies tonight," we tell ourselves. But someone in the family wants us to go, so we do. The chances are we will thoroughly enjoy the film and be grateful for having been "dragged out" to see it. How much more sensible to have approached the experience in a spirit-of-episode!

"Another cocktail party?" we sigh. But may there not be at least one person there whom we will be especially happy to see?

Then why not look forward to seeing that person as a pleasurable episode? Chances are we will really enjoy chatting with several others, and come away with a sense of having had a refreshing time. Then why not look forward to the party as an episode-in-friendship?

"Another committee meeting at the country club," we groan. Perhaps it is called to decide on whether to build a swimming pool. We can attend it with dread, for we know it will be a long meeting; or we can approach it as an essential prelude to many happy swimming-episodes for our children in the future, and throw ourselves into the undertaking with enthusiasm. The payoff will come next morning at breakfast when we announce. "Well, youngsters, this summer we're going to have a swimming pool at the club, with a snack-bar on the terrace. Won't that be fun?" An experience, which in advance would have been hard to classify as between a project or an episode, is turned into a wrapped package of family enjoyment. How wise it would have been to have approached it as having long-range episode possibilities.



Life can be made much more interesting, even exciting, if we approach every project or episode as a miniature adventure in working or living, something with real progress or fun possibilities. Who of us ever knows when some unpromising project may turn into an experience with large consequences, or some minor episode into a major event in our lives?

A young writer was asked to write a brief article about a well-known company for a business magazine. He put weeks of research into getting the facts, and more weeks into writing the article. In fact, he devoted time and thought to it all out of proportion to its seeming importance. After the article appeared in the magazine the president of the company sent for him.

"This business needs a public relations department," he said.

"How would you like to head it?" He mentioned a salary that almost took the young man's breath away. He took the job and ultimately became a vice-president of the corporation. A minor project, well executed, had changed the whole course of his career.



One of the most successful marriages I have ever known was the result of a chance meeting at a cocktail party between a woman of thirty and a man of thirty-three. Both of them had looked forward with dread to the party because they were going as guests of people they were visiting and they "wouldn't know a soul." Less than a year later they were married. A minor episode had turned into a life adventure for two people.

We can never tell when Fortune is lurking around the corner. So why should we not live with a sense of expectancy? What if we do suffer occasional letdowns? Far better to look forward with pleasure, than to expect to be bored. At least we will not suffer twice!

The art of living, the most important of all the arts in which we humans engage, is to maintain a sound balance between the time and energy we expend on projects and that which we devote to episodes. To achieve such a balance results in a well-rounded life.

Instead of drifting aimlessly through the twenty-four hours of each day, project-and-episode living calls for preparing our minds for the next project or episode. This involves consciously organizing our faculties to squeeze every bit of progress and enjoyment out of each by packaging it as a separate and distinct unit-of-living, and tying the package with the string of accomplishment and satisfaction.

The simplest way to use the packaging technique is to "draw mental circles" around the projects and episodes we are about to embark on. to think of them as packages to be wrapped and stored as accomplishments if they are projects affecting our

progress, or as episodes to be stored in memory if they are experiences that enrich our lives



Even the routine of our lives can be packaged And it should be.

A history teacher who has an enviable reputation for her ability to interest students in her subject lays out special problem-projects for herself each day. "Young Bill Green is having a difficult time with the Civil War Today I will see if I can't find some way to make it *real* to him." Or, "Dottie Terwilliger is so full of 'boy thoughts' that she is going to fail her history if she doesn't buckle down and study. I'll take her on at recess this morning as a special project"

She admits that she does not succeed with every try But her average is surprisingly high Her teaching days are doubly productive because she plans them on a project basis. In doing so she avoids many of the irritations and frustrations which plague her sister-teachers who plod along on a catch-as-catch-can basis, using their time as a *stream* instead of as a series of sharply defined *projects*.



A minister whose sermons are fresh and vigorous makes a definite project of reading the morning newspaper "I used to look upon reading the paper as an unavoidable interruption to my day's work Then you explained your 'project' idea to me. The next morning I thought I'd apply it to my newspaper reading I told myself that reading the paper carefully was important, for my responsibility to my congregation is to relate religion to everyday life, and treat with the problems and worries that plague our generation For the first time, I read the paper as a 'project,' to try to find in the day's news an idea for my next week's sermon My mind was stimulated by this approach. I read rapidly but without my former sense of reading merely to get

the morning paper behind me. Before I finished I had an excellent newspoint around which to build a sermon.

"Ever since that morning my newspaper reading has been a stimulating part of the routine of my day. I look forward to it, settle down to it with a sense of expectancy, and finish it with a sense of accomplishment"

This minister has made an important discovery: that routine projects can often be turned into enjoyable episodes.



A mother who was bored with preparing "the everlasting three meals a day," decided that she would apply the project idea to her cooking by making one meal each day a Special Event. She tries a tempting new dish, or some new way of preparing or serving a familiar one. It may be a breakfast dish, or a luncheon dish for the children, or some new soup or entree or dessert for dinner

She studies the recipes in the women's magazines and on the homemaker's page of her daily newspaper. She reads the recipes on packages, and writes for recipe books advertised in the magazines.

"My family never knows what to expect," she relates with pride. "Of course, not all of the dishes I try appeal to my husband or the children. But they like most of them. Certainly, our meals are much more enjoyable and lively than they used to be. We seem to be 'living higher,' and for the first time in my life I really enjoy cooking.

"Not only that, but planning my meals ahead as 'projects'—as you call them—has taught me to plan my other household chores and my shopping on a project basis rather than as a continuous routine."

It is hard to tell whether this mother is packaging projects or episodes. When we attack *any* project in a spirit of adventure it is very likely to turn into an episode!

A New Jersey farmer has a "Project Blackboard" in his kitchen. Each morning he chalks on it just the things he proposes to take care of that day. Instead of facing an endless stream of farm tasks, every morning he breaks up his day's activities into project-pieces.

"No, I don't always get them all finished—some of them take days and weeks. But those I don't get around to, or fail to finish, I keep putting back on the blackboard every morning until they are done," he reports.

Parenthetically, I might report that at my summer home in New Hampshire I discovered that an adaptation of this idea enables me to use my work-time so efficiently that I have more time to enjoy the place. Each morning I list on a 3x5 card the jobs I want to get done that day. This card I put in the pocket of my shirt. It is my "Chore Conscience." I find myself impatient to get at these chores so that I can cross them off. When they are all crossed off, I am absolutely free to do whatever I want for the rest of the day. There are always many other chores crying for attention, but they have to wait for another day. Short of an emergency I have no further responsibilities around the place until the morrow.

As for how to decide what to put on the card each morning, there are nearly always one or two "must" items which head the list. Then I select one major chore and a number of minor ones. The latter I sandwich in between the "must" tasks to give me a sense of progress. That makes it a game I play with myself—which is part of the art of living.

This technique is the only way I know to really enjoy a summer place. It frees the mind and spirit. I recommend it enthusiastically for managing the stream of odd jobs that can spoil one's peace of mind on a farm where there always seem to be more things to do than one can possibly get done. It is an equally effective technique to use around a city or suburban home in connection with those odd jobs that are so easily put off.

Time is given us for *accomplishment* and for *living*. Working and playing in terms of projects and episodes will greatly enhance our proficiency and pleasure in both.

Of course, none of us can expect to plan ahead every hour of every day. Nor would we want to. Life would be much too scheduled, and we would be entirely too time-conscious. Yet all of us will use our time and energy to much better advantage if we will make the project-and-episode approach part of the pattern of our daily living.

If we develop the habit of packing every possible ounce of accomplishment into each project we undertake, and every possible ounce of enjoyment into each episode, we shall be very effectively helping ourselves to all the time we need for wonderfully satisfying living.

FOUR

Orderliness Is Important to the Pattern

To live successfully to a pattern requires that we have a clear idea of what we want from life. It requires, also, that we be effectively organized and equipped for efficient living.

Many years ago, as a young man, this was brought home to me forcibly while visiting at the home of a friend who earned large fees in the then-new field of industrial engineering. Put this man in an inefficient, poorly organized manufacturing plant and he would quickly bring order out of chaos. Machines would be regrouped for straight-line production. Workbenches would be organized so that tools were in the right place to be picked up naturally. All obsolete or needless tools and equipment would be removed. Special racks would be built for storage of supplies near the places they were to be used. Plant offices would be laid out to save steps and use space to the best possible advantage. In short, everything would be organized for efficiency and economy of operation and ease of working.

In his home, I observed, it was another matter. The top of his library desk was a jumble of books, magazines, papers, accumulated mail, stray notes to himself—even a half-empty medicine bottle and a spoon!

His wife told me that even so simple a home routine as dressing

in the morning was an ordeal for her husband. His bureau drawers, she said, were a confusion of shirts, belts, handkerchiefs, cuff links, tie clips, underwear, pajamas, dress shirts, sport shirts, socks, traveling articles. He could never find anything when he wanted it in a hurry—and he usually was in a hurry. He was forever having to enlist her help.

As for packing for one of his frequent trips, that was like a bad dream for both of them. Usually it consumed a hectic half hour, what with trying to find this or that or the other thing in his bureau and clothes closet.

Yet this man was an efficiency engineer!

About a year later I visited this home again and was surprised to find a great change. Never have I seen a home better organized for efficient living.

Laughingly his wife told me the story. One day when he was in a hurry to catch a train she became exasperated when she had to cancel an appointment in order to help him pack.

"For a self-confessed efficiency engineer you are a terrible advertisement for yourself and your profession," she sputtered. "Talk about shoemaker's children! Why don't you take yourself on as a client and get yourself organized?"

Settled in his Pullman seat on the train, breathless from the confusion of his hasty departure, and smarting from his wife's gibe, my efficiency friend admitted sheepishly that he really should take himself on as a client. Being a man of action, he resolved to do so, forthwith.

It struck him that the first place to start was with his briefcase, which was almost bursting from the mass of reports, plotting paper, drawing instruments, slide rules, stationery, and assorted letters and memoranda crammed into its three compartments.

He began at once to sort out this material and was surprised to find that about a third of it could either be thrown away or kept in his office files. He had thoughtlessly permitted it to accumulate, always promising himself to clear it out when he returned from his current trip, but never getting around to it. Then

it struck him that instead of a three-compartment briefcase he should have one of four compartments so that he could organize it into four logical "departments."

He made a note "Buy a four-compartment briefcase"

Then he got to thinking of his scrambled bureau drawers at home, and began to make rough sketches of how they might be organized. Next he visualized his clothes closet. Then his library desk. Then his workbench in the cellar, which was always in a state of jumbled confusion. If he wanted a tool it was never where it ought to be, and finding the right size nail, screw or bolt was usually a labor of minutes.

As he had reached for his pencil, it had occurred to him that his pockets needed organizing. One thing had always bothered him. When not wearing a vest he had no suitable pocket to keep his pencil, fountain pen, and eyeglass case. He made a note that the next suit he had made would have a special pocket on the inside left breast of his coat just wide enough to accommodate his eyeglass case, pencil, and fountain pen. He checked the keycase in his pocket and found in it two keys that he no longer used, but which he had been carrying deadhead for several years. These he took off.

"It is lucky my wife is the only one who knows what a rotten efficiency expert I am at home!" he told himself as he made one note after another of the things he planned to do to put the routine of his daily living on an efficient basis.



Upon his return home he called in a cabinetmaker and together they planned partitions for all the drawers of his bureau. Then for the drawers of his library desk. They emptied his clothes closet and planned new shelves and modern hangers. They visited his workshop in the basement and worked out plans for shelves and racks and bins.

On my second visit to his home he told me this story with

engaging frankness Then he took me up to his room to show me the results.

His top bureau drawer was a honeycomb of compartments, each just the right size for its purpose One held handkerchiefs, another a row of rolled-up belts, another his traveling case and traveling slippers, another his brush and comb, and so on A narrow compartment accommodated his folding traveling umbrella. Every item or group of related items had its special compartment.

The second drawer was partitioned for three kinds of shirts, the third drawer for light and heavy underwear, with two compartments for socks, one for black, the other for colored, the fourth drawer for summer and winter pajamas, with a section for sweaters

Then he showed me his clothes closet. There were batteries of compartments accommodating shoes, hats, and various odds and ends The clothes rack was on rollers and could be pulled out into the light when he wanted to select a suit.

On the back of his bedroom door was a special rack holding thirty-six neckties

"One of the real dividends from this organization," he told me, "is that I can now pack for a trip of any length in twelve minutes flat—and without my wife's help! And I never leave out anything I need."

Next he took me to the library and exhibited his desk, its top clear and its drawers all neatly partitioned to accommodate stationery, supplies, reference manuals, correspondence (answered and to-be-answered), bills (paid and to-be-paid), pens, pencils, slide rules, drawing instruments—all the tools of his trade

"Now come down to the basement," he invited. Here he proudly pointed to a long wall panel with tools resting on nails or hung on hooks, a silhouette of each tool painted on the panel behind it so that its proper place was visible at a glance.

The drawers of his workbench were neatly partitioned with compartments of appropriate size and shape for everything

At one end of the bench was a metal cabinet with scores of

little drawers containing various sizes and kinds of screws, nuts, bolts, washers, tacks, staples, brads, etc. At the other end was a long tray with compartments for nails of all sizes. There was a cabinet with flat drawers for sheets of sandpaper and emery cloth. Beside his workbench was a partitioned bin accommodating assorted sizes and lengths of wood. Nearby was a metal receptacle for shavings and litter, and directly over it hung a fire extinguisher.

Finally he led me to the far end of the basement to some barrels filled with everything imaginable, from broken tools, old magazines, discarded fountain pens, theatre programs, piles of ancient reports, old shoes and hats, shirts with frazzled cuffs, empty bottles. A truly weird collection!

"These are the things I found in my bureau, clothes closet, desk, and workbench that I am going to throw away," he explained. "I had no idea I had so much junk cluttering up my life, or that I was wasting so much valuable time looking for things. As an efficiency engineer I was certainly treating myself like a shoemaker's child and no mistake!"



There is an amusing sequel to this story. A few months later my efficiency-expert friend had sweet revenge. On a Sunday morning a few weeks after he had finished his own efficiency program, he was sitting in the breakfast nook reading while his wife prepared their dinner. As he watched her he was struck by the unhandiness of the kitchen, the unnecessary steps she was taking, and the out-of-dateness of many of the utensils she was using.

"Say," he exclaimed, "your kitchen is certainly a terrible advertisement for my profession! It badly needs reorganizing. May I offer my professional services?" He proceeded to enumerate the inefficiencies he had noticed as she worked.

She saw the humor in the situation and "hired" him on the spot.

During the next three weekends he studied the whole kitchen setup as a problem in "production efficiency." Not only were the cupboards and the pantry poorly organized, and the equipment so placed that far too many steps were required in the preparation and serving of meals, but he discovered also a lack of many needed "tools." There were too few sizes of kitchen knives, for instance, and she was putting up with many makeshifts in refrigerator utensils. Several additional kinds and sizes of pots and pans were badly needed.

He engaged a carpenter and a plumber and reorganized the whole kitchen and pantry layout, just as though he were streamlining a factory. The gas range and refrigerator were relocated to save steps (This was before the modern "unit kitchens" had even been thought of, and every piece of equipment had to be installed on its own.) Special shelves were built in the pantry, and rows of hooks were installed, each for its own particular utensil.

Then husband and wife went together to a housefurnishing store and filled in with needed pots, pans, and cutlery. They also replaced a number of worn-out utensils.

For a surprisingly small outlay the efficiency of the kitchen was just about doubled. Without thinking of it in that terminology, they had been shopping for time.

The final satisfaction they both got out of the experience was the pile of obsolete, broken, and never-used dishes, utensils, and gadgets they dumped into the trash barrel.



It is a safe bet that each one of us could save ourselves a great deal of time and nervous energy by giving our living and working environment and equipment an equally drastic overhauling.

I took a leaf from my friend's experience myself and had my bureau drawers partitioned. As for my office desk, not content with having a few extra partitions put in the drawers, I designed a special desk and had it made to order to fit my particular work-

ing methods, with a special place for everything I use. I also designed and had made two cabinets with special drawers for particular purposes, and shelves for reference books, telephone directories, etc. Standing, one at either side of my desk chair, these cabinets have proved wonderfully effective time-and-energy savers.

After all, is not our time too important to be content with the unimaginative stock patterns of furniture and equipment the market offers? Why should we not study our own special needs and equip ourselves to work and live as efficiently as we possibly can? If this involves having things made to our individual requirements, why not? Spread over the years, the cost of such personal efficiency would amount to only a few dollars a year. It would conserve not only our time but our nervous energy out of all proportion to whatever the money investment.



If we need more than one article, why should we not invest in as many as we need to make us truly efficient? It took me years to learn that it was economy to have everything I needed for my work right at my elbow, that having to go upstairs or downstairs for a reference book, a pair of shears, a hand stapler, or a fresh stock of paper interrupted my train of thought when writing. Today, I have five late-edition collegiate dictionaries, three up-to-date copies of *Roget's Thesaurus*, three hand staplers, three copies of the latest edition of the *World Almanac*, five clip boards, six stocks of lead pencils, four pencil sharpeners, six trays of assorted sizes of paper clips, six packets of manuscript paper, four stocks of postage stamps of assorted denominations, two pairs of regulation postal scales, four pairs of shears, four rulers. These working tools are within arm's reach wherever I may be working, whether in my office, or upstairs or downstairs at home, or at my summer place in the country. It is amazing the time and irritation these duplicates save me, and for a ridiculously small investment.

Carrying the branch-office-everywhere idea to its logical conclusion, in the glove compartment of each of our family cars is an envelope of writing materials, and in my traveling bag is a small leather-covered "office case," which I had made to order. Its compartments provide all the essentials, from paper clips and folding scissors to the world's tiniest dictionary



If the average housewife were to invade her kitchen and pile up in the center of the kitchen table all the broken, inefficient, obsolete, and never-used dishes, tools, and utensils, if she were to make a list of the things she needs, either to replace or supplement them, and if she were then to go to a variety or housefurnishing store and shop against this list, examining every new and useful tool, utensil, or gadget the store offers for kitchen convenience, she would be amazed to find how much time and energy she had purchased!

Unless she has had her kitchen modernized recently, she would probably be able to just about *double* her working efficiency. And that without installing any really expensive equipment.

The same would hold true of the average business or professional man. If he would visit an office equipment showroom and a well-stocked stationery store with his secretary, he would discover that his office is working with outmoded equipment and supplies that are actually costing far more every year in wasted time and energy than it would cost to equip with thoroughly modern facilities.

Why should any of us go on, year after year, in our homes or our offices, wasting precious time and putting up with petty irritations that needlessly waste our time and consume our nervous energy every hour of the day? Is it any wonder we do not feel that we have all the time we need?

An orderly and efficient working and living environment is definitely part of everyone's pattern of success and progress

FIVE

Time Out for Friendships

In working out a pattern for a happy and satisfying life, perhaps no single factor is quite so important as taking time to keep in touch with our friends. Too often we permit our busyness to come between us and the people who could add greatly to our enjoyment of life. Our intentions are good but our performance is apt to be lamentably poor. We keep putting off our contacts until we have "more time." Actually, our trouble is that we do not use the time we have.

There are two particularly effective ways we can use our hours and days to fuller advantage in cultivating our friendships. One is to plan ahead and get ourselves "booked up" to do things or go places with our friends. When we make definite engagements, most of us manage to keep them. We may be so tired when the time comes that we wish we did not have to go out, and we certainly would not leave the house if we had not made the engagement. But we keep the date and have a fine time, and we are very much pleased with ourselves for having made it. True, once in a while dates have to be canceled, but as a rule planned engagements seem to work out quite well.

A man and wife who have been exceptionally successful in keeping their friendships active have an interesting rule. When they

spend an evening or go any place with friends, before parting they make a definite plan for their next get-together, even though it may be a month or more later. They tell me that, much to their own surprise, these plans seldom have to be called off. The result is that their calendar is dotted for weeks ahead with dates that are circled in their minds for enjoyable episodes. In this way they plan definitely for many "red-letter days."

Another of my neighbors has a way of keeping up his friendships that is as practical as it is simple. Like most of us he has a list of friends to whom he sends Christmas cards. At least once a month he goes over this list and selects a number of friends to whom he writes notes, or "pays a telephone visit." In this way, at least twice a year he contacts every name on his list. Frequently these letter or telephone contacts result in visits or outings with these friends that otherwise they would not have planned.



An excellent way to cultivate our friends is to watch for unexpected opportunities to get in touch with them. For example, today I had a business luncheon engagement. At nine-thirty this morning it was postponed on account of the other man's illness. So, unexpectedly, I had a free luncheon hour. Instead of following my first impulse to have a quick lunch alone and get back to my office, I asked myself what friend I might invite to lunch with me.

The first man I called already had an engagement, but I took the opportunity to make a future date with him. The second, an old friend whom I had not seen for many months, accepted my invitation with such warm enthusiasm that my whole morning was made more productive because my spirit felt so stimulated.

We had a thoroughly enjoyable visit over the lunch table. I returned to my desk refreshed in mind from the contact, for we had covered a wide range of news and topics of mutual interest.

I am writing this at home in the evening, and I am still ex-

periencing a glow of pleasure over this spur-of-the-moment luncheon reunion.

Most of us would be richly repaid if we were to make more opportunities to mend our friendship fences. Often this would involve nothing more than obeying the impulse to stop in on a friend when passing. Or, if going for an automobile ride, heading for a friend's house on the chance of his being at home. Such impulsive contacts are often more enjoyable than planned visits. Because they are unexpected by both parties, they are in the nature of tiny adventures-in-living. Our shame is that we treat ourselves to so few such episodes.

We are always "going" to write that letter, or "going" to call up for a telephone visit, or "going" to invite a friend to lunch. But we don't *do* it. We keep promising ourselves to "find" the time. But every one of us ought to have learned by now that time can seldom be *found*, it has to be *made*.

Keeping our friendships in good repair should be one of the most important elements in the pattern of living of every one of us.

Travel Is Part of the Pattern

With their same-day wirephoto pictures of world events and personalities, and with their wire service coverage of the news, our daily newspapers take us across the seven seas and give us a ringside view of what is going on all over the globe. The magazines, with their color-illustrated travel articles and their coverage of the foreign scene, give us an even broader and deeper picture of the life of the peoples of many lands. Television cameras take us to places where important events are transpiring, at home and abroad. Newsreels give us front row seats at most of the really important happenings around the world.

All of these great mediums of communication are at our disposal, and they are worth more intelligent use than most of us make of them. But not one of them, nor all of them together, can quite take the place of foreign travel.

Of all the uses of our time, energy, and money that any of us can make, none is likely to be more rewarding than visiting foreign lands, or distant sections of our own country. Travel leaves mental pictures that stay with us always. In memory we re-live our travel experiences many times—with no further cost in time or money. The newspapers and magazines and books we read become vastly more interesting because we have visited

many of the places mentioned in the news dispatches, or pictured in the magazines, or forming the locale of novels and books of adventure

But even more important, we gain in knowledge of the peoples of other lands and of other sections of our own country. We acquire a better understanding of their modes of life, their problems, and their needs and aspirations. If we have the wisdom to visit them with open minds, we become more tolerant. And tolerance between peoples is perhaps the world's greatest need today.



Since beginning fifteen years ago to observe people's habits-of-mind with respect to foreign travel, I have discovered that with some people the *idea* of a trip abroad is about as much of a mental hurdle as the number of weeks the trip will require, or its cost. The oceans seem to act as "water hazards." As in golf, we tend to tighten up when we face a body of water that must be crossed.

It is a pity to permit such a mental hazard to stand in the way of enjoying a trip abroad, or to a distant section of our own country which we have never visited. Now that we can be whisked by air from San Francisco to New York between breakfast and bedtime, or from New York to Mexico City between noon and midnight, or from Chicago to Paris in sixteen or seventeen hours, the time problem has all but ceased to exist.

The most common alibi for not taking trips is, "I can't get away just now." The truth is, with most of us the time for taking an extended trip is never quite right—and it never will be. The only way we will ever do our quota of traveling is to *make definite reservations*—and then let nothing interfere.

It is surprising how situations iron out when we proceed in businesslike fashion with travel plans. A couple planned a trip to Italy three years ago. They were to fly from New York to Rome. It was to be their first transatlantic flight. The wife was

not well, and as the date of their trip approached she grew extremely nervous. Two days before they were to take off she seemed in no condition to undertake a trip abroad.

The husband was in an embarrassing situation, since all plane and hotel reservations had been made through a travel bureau operated by a business friend. He felt that he must have a really good excuse if he was to cancel the accommodations at such a late hour. To cover himself, he decided to get his wife's doctor to advise that she was not well enough to make the trip.

To his surprise the doctor told him, "If I were you I would go ahead I feel sure a large part of your wife's trouble is nervous dread of her first flight across the Atlantic. Once in the air, with no chance to change her mind, I am confident she will snap out of her fears and begin to enjoy herself."

"All right, Doctor," he said, "you call my wife and tell her you think it will be all right for her to go."

They did go. And, as the doctor had predicted, the wife did "snap out of it." She was not sick a single day during the entire trip. The couple has since made a second Atlantic flight, with no pre-take-off fears.

With air travel available, "I can't find the time" is an alibi that no longer holds water. To deny ourselves foreign travel, if we can possibly afford it, is to deny ourselves the most fascinating and stimulating experiences any of us can possibly have.



One enterprising couple is following a program of visiting one new country each year for the rest of their lives. They have already visited England, France, Holland, Belgium, Norway, Denmark, Sweden, Switzerland, Italy, Greece, Venezuela, Mexico, Panama, Nova Scotia, Bermuda, Hawaii, and Canada, as well as Florida, New England, and the Pacific Coast, the Grand Canyon, Yellowstone Park, and the Arizona Desert. They are never away more than a month.

I asked the husband, who is head of a company of medium

size, if it was not difficult for him to take time off from his business for these annual trips.

"No," he said, "several years ago I made an important discovery about taking trips abroad. I found that I do not lose any time from my business. Because I am going to be too far away to be reached easily, I begin months ahead to organize my affairs so that the business will not slow down while I am away. I also ask the head of every department to have his plans ready for my approval a month or two before I am to leave. Often this results in better planning than would have been done had I remained home.

"Meanwhile, I find myself making a special effort to close important sales contracts so that our plant will have plenty of orders to work on. In fact, in the two or three months before I leave, without quite realizing how, I manage to do an extra month's work. Because I am working to get the decks cleared for an interesting trip, in spite of the pressure I have put on myself I never feel particularly tired when we take off.

"In a sense," he concluded, "planning for my trips adds a certain momentum to our business which carries it over the periods of my absence. Actually, I suspect it results in more progress than the company would make if I did not take these yearly trips!"

This checks with my own experience. In the past thirty years my wife and I have visited many foreign countries and I have found that most long trips have been self-liquidating in their time expenditure. In anticipation of being away I have put through projects in days or weeks that otherwise might have dragged out over several months. In effect, I have *made* or *stored* time. In addition, I have returned refreshed and enriched in mind and spirit, and full of new ideas.

Definitely, travel—particularly foreign travel—should be a part of the pattern of a well-regulated life.

SEVEN

The Wisdom of Loafing

Charles Darwin wrote, "A man who dares to waste one hour of time has not discovered the value of life"

This would seem to leave no time in life for loafing. Happily, such is not the case. But there are wasteless as well as wasteful ways of loafing

The dictionary defines loafing as "passing time lazily or idly, lounging, loitering" In this high-pressure age we seem, by common consent, to have broadened the definition to embrace just about everything we do other than working. Loafing seems to have come to mean "playing hooky."

However we define it, loafing is an important part of the pattern of happy and successful living. We should never lose sight of the enormous value of an hour; but we should also stop from time to time to sip life in leisurely fashion. The art of loafing wisely is to use *all* of our time intelligently, balancing loafing against work, since both contribute importantly to our over-all progress.

One way to do this, as brought out in a previous chapter, is to charge our subconscious minds with the elements of a problem or project, and then go fishing, or take a snooze, or "just sit,"—or whatever form of loafing happens to appeal to us—and let

the fireless-cooker section of our minds work on it, without bothering our conscious minds about the problem or project, for the time being. Ideas will often come popping out when we least expect them. I imagine Charles Darwin often loafed in this intelligent fashion



An especially valuable time-and-energy-saving form of loafing is what might be called "contemplative loafing". spending some time looking over our plans or projects in leisurely fashion in advance of plunging into them.

Many years ago I read a story about the great-grandfather of Diedrich Knickerbocker. It seems that on taking the contract to build a church in Rotterdam, this old gentleman took three months of smoking for pure consideration of the work, then three more months in knocking his head and breaking his pipe against every church on a circuitous journey from Rotterdam through Amsterdam, Delft, Haarlem, Leyden, and The Hague and back to Rotterdam, then three more in walking and navigating and climbing to attain coigns of vantage for contemplating the site of the still unbuilt church.

At last, having smoked three hundredweight of tobacco and contemplated the city for a full twelve months, and having filled the good Rotterdammers with the fidgets because they thought he had been loafing all this time, he pulled off his coat and laid the cornerstone of the church. History records that when completed this church was so conveniently located and comfortably constructed that all the zealous Christians of Rotterdam preferred it to any other!

Which would seem to prove that there is a time for loafing and a time for working. If all of us did a little more intelligent loafing, we would do our work with much less drain on our four forms of energy, and we would use our time to far better advantage.

A successful druggist spent the first ten years of his business life trying to catch up with the bills of his fast-growing business. One day he decided that life was too short to be spent this way, "with the Sheriff about three paces behind me."

In desperation, he went off on a three-day fishing trip to get away from his bills and his worries. In the silence of the woods he confided to himself that he was "a dumb fool", that he was working too much and doing too little planning ahead.

"I've tried for ten years to *work* myself out of this hand-to-mouth method of storekeeping without success. Now I'm going to try *loafing and planning* my way out," he informed himself soberly.

He decided then and there to "take off an hour or two a day to keep the Sheriff away," and to spend this time going to a movie, reading an interesting book, shopping, visiting business friends and swapping ideas and experience, taking a stroll or just sitting on a bench in a nearby park, watching life go by. Though he did not realize it, he was giving his subconscious mind a chance to help him with the problems of his business.

Within eight months he was discounting his bills and looking around for a bigger store. Thanks to doing a bit of intelligent loafing, he had shaken off the Sheriff and was planning for the expansion of his business. Today he owns five profitable stores. He still devotes an hour or two of the day to "loafing."



There are a great many ways of wasteless loafing which Darwin probably would have sanctioned. What his seemingly uncompromising statement about wasting one hour of time meant, I feel sure, was that there are so many wonderful things to do in this world, and so much to be accomplished, that any man who loafs from sheer laziness or boredom has not really discovered life.



"What about constitutional laziness?" some reader may ask.

In defense of the constitutionally lazy person, it must be admitted that there may be a physiological reason for his laziness. One of my business friends who has always had unusual drive told me that until he was in his thirties he thought nearly all the men of his acquaintance were lazy.

"Then, one day," he related, "it suddenly occurred to me that I had been lucky enough to be born with more energy than they. From then on I was more tolerant."

It is true that some people are born with a low energy quotient. It is also true that not all constitutionally lazy people are a drag on society. Some of them learn to *manage* their laziness—to make it serve themselves and the world around them. They do this by thinking out simpler ways to do things so that less work is involved, not only for themselves but for others.

An official of one of the large automobile companies has made this interesting statement: "When I have a tough job in the plant and can't find any easy way to do it, I have a lazy man put on it. He will find an easy way to do it in ten days. Then we adopt his method."

We may become impatient with lazy people, but if we study them objectively we will learn much about the efficient use of time as well as motions. First, they challenge the essentiality of doing a thing at all. Then, if it *must* be done, they try to do it with the least expenditure of energy. They may use their laziness to earn them more time to loaf, but often we as well as they benefit from their laziness.



The old idea that work must be "hard" is as outmoded as the quaint notion which prevailed a generation ago that to be efficacious medicine must be bitter. With all the facilities available to us for doing things easily and quickly, it is silly for us to do anything the hard, time-consuming way, whether mental or physical work is involved.

The fact is, many of us should be ashamed that we have not adopted, in our work and our daily living, more of the time- and labor-saving devices and helps that are to be found in catalogs and retail establishments. Many of these devices are the ingenious inventions or developments of lazy people who have used imagination to serve their own laziness, to the profit of all who are wise enough to buy and use them. The world is actually in debt to their laziness!



Another effective form of laziness is represented by the "Let the ants do it" theory of one of my Chicago friends. This man insists that most of us spend entirely too much time doing work that other people could and would do for us, if only we would show them how it would be advantageous to *them*.

This is how he explains his "ant theory": "If a grocery boy spilled some sugar on the doorstep, the housewife might get a broom and sweep it off. But if there were any ants in the vicinity she would not need to bother, for they would carry every grain of the sugar away, leaving the doorstep perfectly clean. But their purpose would not be the same as hers, because their interest would be different. Her interest would be to clean the doorstep, theirs would be to store up food. But their interest would result, nevertheless, in a clean doorstep."

This is a simple example of a profound bit of philosophy. Much of our work would be done for us by others, saving us great expenditures of time and energy, if we would spend less time and energy "working hard" and more time showing others how it would profit them to take some of the workload off our shoulders.

We have only to recall how Tom Sawyer, in Mark Twain's famous story, enlisted his playmates in what was to him an onerous job—whitewashing the fence. He made them see it as a privilege, rather than the chore it was to him.

This was a skillful bit of salesmanship by a lazy boy. He did

not neglect the job, but, being lazy, he *thought* his way out of it!

All of us are engaged almost daily in selling something to the world—our services, our ideas, our plans, our convictions, ourselves. If only we would learn to scatter the “sugar” of what we have to sell, not in terms of our interests but entirely in terms of those we want to influence, the “ants” would pick up the grains and carry them away—for their own purposes. As a result, we would accomplish more, and make more personal progress, with less expenditure of our own time and energy.



There remains one important rule for loafing: We should never *half* loaf. The way to get value out of loafing is to decide definitely to *loaf*, or else to decide definitely to *work*. To play hooky and at the same time chide ourselves for not working is to take all the value out of loafing without getting anything done. This is apt to put us in ill humor with ourselves, and result in consuming nervous energy as well as wasting our time.

It all adds up to this: occasional periods of loafing are important in everybody's pattern of everyday living. Not to loaf occasionally is to short-change ourselves, just as truly as over-indulgence in loafing will consume our time without giving us a fair return. In that sense Darwin was right when he wrote. “A man who dares to waste one hour of time has not discovered the value of life.”

EIGHT

Patience Is Part of the Pattern

Years ago I bought an old farmhouse in New Hampshire and had it remodeled. The dooryard boasted only one small maple tree on the east side of the house, and a spindly ash sapling on the west side. Shade was sorely needed.

At the time it seemed hopeless to set out trees. In all probability our family would be through with the place long before any trees we might plant would grow large enough to cast any appreciable shade.

Fortunately a neighboring farmer was so insistent that "trees grow faster than you think" that we did set out ten small trees, four maples, five elms, and a white birch. Several of them died the first year, and one or two more the second year. Each season I argued, "What's the use of replacing them? We are not here the year 'round to tend them, and anyway we shall never enjoy their shade."

But my farmer-neighbor had more faith in time than I. He insisted that we set out new saplings. I agreed, but with a sense of futility.

For the first four or five years nothing much seemed to happen. I was convinced that we had planted trees solely for the benefit of the next generation. What I did not appreciate was that all

this time the trees were struggling to establish their roots. Time was busily working for us, below ground where we could not see the results

Then, one summer when we arrived at the farm, to our surprise we were greeted by a yard full of bushy little trees!

Now, twenty-five years later—how time does fly!—we have nine large shade trees, all of them so healthy and soundly rooted that they have survived two hurricanes without losing a branch. Today our summer home nestles in a beautiful grove of trees which adds greatly to its comfort, and which appreciably increases the value of the place. All because a wise and foresighted neighbor had insisted that time would work for us. "All you need is patience," he had told me repeatedly.



That experience taught me that time always seems slow in prospect and swift in retrospect. Patience is a vitally important part of the pattern of our lives—patience that outlasts setbacks and discouragements. It is one of the great weaknesses of our generation that we are not willing to wait for our plans to "take root." In our personal affairs and our business or professional activities we want results overnight. Probably more of our plans are spoiled by our impatience than by almost any other of our shortcomings.

Time works quietly, and usually with great efficiency and thoroughness, for the man who can wait patiently. As our silent partner we should respect and utilize its cooperation more than we do.

When we find ourselves pressing too hard, we would do well to follow the sage counsel of a man who for years has been an adviser to executives in high positions in commerce and industry. Standing off and watching these men strain to reach their objectives, and appreciating that time is fleeting and the price of progress is hard driving, nevertheless every so often he writes a

cryptic note of just eight words to one or another of these captains of industry "Try resting on your oars for a while"

This man knows there are times when people or situations cannot be hurried, that if we relax temporarily and let the current carry us we will save ourselves an enormous waste of mental and nervous energy

When we rest on our oars and watch developments with a mind free of any sense of frustration, we can see the situation more clearly Because of this, we can move swiftly and confidently when progress is again possible. In the end, we usually gain rather than lose time.

There is, indeed, an art to using patience that is at once a specific for outwitting our natural impatience, and a technique for using our time and energy to the fullest advantage It has already been described on an earlier page of this book, but it will bear repeating It is Dr Charles W Eliot's simple specific. "When blocked in an enterprise I had much at heart, I always turned immediately to another field of work where progress looked possible, biding my time for a chance to resume the obstructed road"

Often we can profitably rest on our oars so far as a particular project is concerned if we busy ourselves in some other area.



While patience is truly a virtue, we must learn to *use* our patience This story is told of the great pianist, Ignace Paderewski. On one of his tours he was playing before a large audience in a Canadian city After the recital a young lady, who possessed considerable musical talent but lacked the patience to practice, rushed backstage to thank him for his wonderful concert. "What infinite patience you must have had to learn to play as you did this evening!" she exclaimed impulsively.

A slow smile crossed Paderewski's face "I have no more patience than anybody else, my dear young lady," he said. "The difference is that I have used mine"

There is a Spanish proverb that reads: "In war patience is

more often of service than force." This is true in the whole process of living. Patience is largely a matter of adjusting our minds and spirits to the realities of a present situation, and then making ourselves as comfortable as possible. The more completely we relax, so far as this special situation is concerned, and actively devote ourselves to other interests, the more likely we will be to shorten the time of waiting.

A wise exercise of patience has the further virtue of helping us to keep our perspective so that we can more readily recognize any turn or development which signals that the time has come to spring into action. When that time arrives, usually the desired result can be achieved quickly and easily.

"All human power is a compound of time and patience," wrote the brilliant French author, Honoré de Balzac. Power and patience—the two are inseparable. If we do not learn the art of patience in outwaiting time, we will never make the progress we might. Patience is a vitally important part of the pattern of success, in business, in the professions, and in home and community life.

NINE

Impatience Also Is Part of the Pattern

While it is true that impatience is the cause of a great many of our mistakes and much of our unhappiness, it is equally true that there are times when impatience is a solid virtue

A plan or project important to us seems to get stuck on a dead center. We try patience. Nothing happens. We turn to something else for the time being, and presently return to our project only to find it is still blocked.

A sense of hopelessness and futility takes possession of us. We are stymied. We fret. In our frustration we burn up a great deal of nervous energy.

When we arrive at this state it is time to take a good look at the situation and ask ourselves: Has patience ceased to be a virtue? Has the time arrived to *make things happen*?

The ability to make things happen is one of the prime essentials to any person's success and progress. Oddly enough, though, it is usually based on patience—*up to a point*.

Time is a wonderful First Assistant, capable of taking care of many of the details and setting the stage for us to go into action. But in some situations there comes an hour or day when we arrive at the conviction that time has done all it can do to "ready" a situation for us. If we are to make progress, we must act.

The problem is to decide when this time has arrived. In the small affairs of daily life, as well as in larger plans and major projects, usually there is a tide-point which William Shakespeare immortalized in the often quoted but ever fresh and cogent lines:

*There is a tide in the affairs of men,
Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune;
Omitted, all the voyage of their life
Is bound in shallows and in miseries.
And we must take the current when it serves,
Or lose our ventures.*

The art is in recognizing this tide-point before we "lose our ventures."

In the nature of things, there are forces at work—inertia, opposition, doubt, timidity—which tend to hold up, if not actually block, nearly every important plan or project any of us ever conceives. There are also times when these forces must be respected, when the obstacles are too big to overcome. But we should be sure they really are controlling influences, and not merely arguments for inaction. We should not permit ourselves to be easily satisfied. Our days slip over the horizon so swiftly that we can miss much of the benefit of our thought and planning and work if we wait too long.



Of course, it is always possible that the delay we are fuming about is our own responsibility. It is human nature for us to blame others for our own sins of omission. Before doing so we would do well to ask ourselves several searching questions:

Am I waiting for others to do something that I should be doing myself?

Have I overlooked some seemingly unimportant factor which may actually be controlling?

Have I failed to make the project clear to any of the people whose cooperation I need?

Am I guilty of procrastination myself in making decisions or taking action?

Would I favor the project myself if someone else were sponsoring it?

Such questions are wholesome to face, for sometimes they reveal that we are not doing everything we might, that our impatience should be turned on ourselves



It is foolish not to look at every situation through other people's eyes, not to listen to other people's counsel, not to heed other people's experience, not to weigh other people's doubts and respect their reservations. But when we have looked, listened, and weighed all the factors soberly, sensibly, and self-critically, if we still have a strong conviction that we ought to go ahead, then we have arrived at the tide-point. The time for patience is past, impatience should take over.

The world is cluttered up with unfinished business in the form of projects that might have been successful, if only at the tide-point someone's patience had turned to activated impatience

How can we judge when we have reached this tide-point?

The president of one of America's fastest-growing corporations, who is noted for his patience and yet moves with breath-taking speed when it runs out, once told me. "When I get a 'bone feeling' that the time for action has come—I act!" What he meant was that when he felt to the very marrow of his bones that further waiting would be a mistake, he acted—not from impatience, but from deep conviction. This is an important distinction

This may explain the soundness of some executives' so-called snap decisions which appear to arise out of impatience. The late Theodore N. Vail told me that, while he might sometimes appear to do so, he had never in his life made a snap decision. He explained that his mind often worked on a problem for weeks or

months. Then—and this often happened in a moment of seeming impatience—he reached a decision and acted—*fast*.



All through life, in our business or professional careers, in our social life, and in home and family affairs, it is necessary to watch for the tide-points and, when we get a “bone feeling,” to *act*! For impatience is definitely a part of the pattern of successful living.

TEN

The Vital Importance of Re-Creation

There is one word in the English language which seems to fall short of adequately conveying its deeper meaning. That word is "recreation." We tend to think of recreation as participation in games, sports, and other time-consuming activities, whereas so small a unit of time as a fraction of a minute may serve admirably for recreation, as will presently be demonstrated. If we insert a hyphen between the word's first and second syllables, thus—*re-creation*—it becomes one of the best picture-words in the language. This is why it will be so spelled wherever it occurs from here on in this book.

The purpose of re-creation is to re-fresh, re-vitalize, re-create us, physically and mentally, and in energy-of-the-spirit. Certainly it should rate high in our pattern of living in its claim for a portion of our time. For unless we do re-create ourselves frequently we "burn our candle at both ends." In so doing we overdraw on our energy account. Thereby we may actually curtail our days in two respects: first by shortening the time each day when we are at our best, second, by drawing so heavily on our store of energy that, if we fail to replenish it frequently, we may very well shorten our life span. Many men do just that, as the obituary columns testify.

This is why re-creation is so overwhelmingly important. It translates itself into health of body, health of mind, health of spirit. Had we all the time in the world, without health to use and enjoy it, we would be time-poor. No matter how busy we are, we owe it to ourselves to plan definitely to take time out for re-creation.

The overburdened business executive or professional man who takes an afternoon off once a week to play golf is very likely using his time wisely. Half a day of enjoyable exercise in the open air serves to stimulate his circulation, rest his mind, and refresh his spirit. He returns to his heavy work-load with a fresh store of at least three forms of energy.

Furthermore, by giving his conscious mind a much-needed rest from all the problems pressing on him, he provides his subconscious mind an opportunity to "take over" for a few hours. And that is the time the subconscious mind works best—when the body and mind are relaxed.

Again, to quote from *The Knack of Using Your Subconscious Mind*, the author advises us to give our subconscious minds problem-assignments, and then turn to other matters, with no further conscious concern about the problem for the time being. He counsels the would-be user of the subconscious mind.

Seek complete mental relaxation by turning to some activity you especially enjoy. Play golf, read a detective story, lunch or dine well and leisurely, go to a concert or the movies, play bridge or canasta, take a brisk walk, or do something that requires skill of hand. Consciously tune out the conscious mind, as you would turn off a radio or television program. Let it go on a vacation.

While it is possible to overdo sports to the neglect of our responsibilities, an occasional game of golf or tennis, a swim, a hike, a sail, or whatever our favorite form of exercise may be, is often the wisest possible investment of part of our time, even when we are very busy.

Re-creation and self-examination can often be combined to correct our perspective. In his autobiography, Bernard Baruch outlines a practice of his own which men and women with heavy responsibilities might well adopt

After each major undertaking—and particularly when things had turned sour—I would shake loose from Wall Street and go off to some quiet place where I could review what I had done and where I had gone wrong. At such times I never sought to excuse myself but was concerned solely with guarding against a repetition of the same error.

Periodic self-examination of this sort is something all of us need, in both private and governmental affairs. It is always wise for individuals and governments to stop and ask whether we should rush on blindly as in the past. Have new conditions arisen which require a change of direction or pace? Have we lost sight of the essential problem and are we simply wasting our energies on distractions? What have we learned that may help us avoid repeating the same old errors? ¹

The serious consequences of working with a tired mind are dealt with in another paragraph in Mr. Baruch's book.

Late in 1945 when General George C. Marshall, then Chief of Staff, was spending a week end at Hobcaw, I remarked to him how important it was for the top officials of government to be able to look beyond the immediate pressures of the day to the looming problems on the horizon. Nodding his head vigorously, he told me, "Early in the war I instructed every officer assigned to the General Staff to get away from Washington for a day or two each week. I didn't want tired minds making decisions that would affect the lives of millions of soldiers." ¹



Happily, our recreation can often be worked into business or professional life in such a way as to provide re-creation. For example, a very successful New York advertising agency head, who is an all-around sportsman, makes up a list, about once in

¹ Baruch, Bernard, *Baruch: My Own Story*. Reprinted with permission of the publishers, Henry Holt and Company, New York.

three months, of business and professional men with whom he would like to play golf or take for a cruise on his boat. These people he dates up, sometimes a fortnight ahead. Usually he succeeds in pretty well covering his list each quarter.

I asked him bluntly if this was not done for business purposes. "No," he replied, "at least not primarily. I do it because as an advertising man it is necessary for me to keep my mind stimulated, to know what people in various industries and professions are thinking and planning, and to keep making fresh contacts. Some of the people I entertain may be helpful to me in a business way at some time, but I never consciously 'cultivate' a man because I think I might sign him up as a client. That would spoil all the fun. I like people, and I aim to have as wide a circle of interesting friends as I possibly can in the limited time at my disposal."



It is by no means necessary to spend days or half-days in re-creation. Minutes will often suffice.

I happen to be one of those persons who is not good at sports, and I take practically no conventional out-of-door exercise. Yet I have been blessed with exceptionally good health all my life. But I do indulge in ten minutes of re-creation each morning, running through Walter Camp's famous exercises known as the "Daily Dozen." How important these ten minutes are to my well-being was brought home to me a while ago when I cracked a rib and for more than a month had to forego my brief but brisk morning workout. During that month I started each day with a mental and physical heaviness that was hard to shake off. I had not been able to stretch my muscles, get the kinks out of my joints, and limber up the vertebrae of my spinal column. I was like a confirmed coffee drinker suddenly deprived of his customary two cups of coffee for breakfast. Instead of plunging into the day with zest I had to struggle to "get going." For the first hour or so I had a sense of working at low efficiency.

My introduction to the Daily Dozen offers further proof that re-creation can be taken in spare minutes.

Years ago I had an appointment one afternoon with Walter Camp. At that time he was doubling as president of the New Haven Clock Company and Yale's head football coach. It was in the former capacity that I was calling on him.

When I entered his office he was standing in the middle of the room with his coat off, both arms stretched straight up in the air, fingers extended. Ignoring me, he proceeded very slowly to bend his body forward without bending his knees, and his outstretched arms began ever so slowly to describe an arc toward the floor. It took a fraction of a minute to complete this arc and touch the floor with the tips of his fingers.

Then he straightened up just as slowly, stood still for a few seconds, slipped on his coat, and sank easily into his swivel chair, a completely relaxed man. I felt like I had been watching a slow-motion movie.

"You caught me taking one of my sixty-second vacations," he said with a laugh. "I do that relaxing exercise about twice in the morning and twice in the afternoon. It gives me a fresh start for another couple of hours of concentrated work."

Then he proceeded to "sell" me on his Daily Dozen exercises, for which I shall always feel deeply indebted to him.



A friend who is a "bug" on deep breathing tells me that taking a few deep breaths once every hour or so, preferably in the open air or by an open door or window, re-creates him. "Deep breathing increases the oxygen supplied to your blood and your blood stream says 'Thank you kindly,'" is his picturesque way of expressing it.

This man says that during the day whenever he faces an especially difficult task, or when he has to make an important decision, or put in an important telephone call, he pauses first

and slowly takes three or four very deep breaths. "My blood stream freshens, my thinking is clearer, and I feel more poised and confident," he declares.

All this may or may not be scientific, but it seems to work. It is a fraction of a second of re-creation

One of the fastest and most popular checkers in a metropolitan supermarket formed the habit years ago of pausing between saying "Thank you" to the customer she has just served and starting to ring up the next customer's purchases. During this brief pause she looks up and says a smiling "Good morning" or "Good afternoon" to the newcomer.

"This tiny break in the routine of checking really refreshes me," she says. "What's more, it keeps me reminded that each customer is a human being—and that I am too! This makes my work more enjoyable."

Whether she knows it or not, this young lady is cooperating intelligently with Mother Nature. The human heart is the hardest-working and most tireless machine in the world. But even the heart has to take a rest between beats. Her ever-so-brief pauses give it that much better chance to rest.



Of course, sleep is the greatest of all forms of re-creation. When we sleep restfully we store energy-of-the-spirit as well as of the mind, muscles, and nervous system. We wake up in a conquering mood. We tackle difficult tasks with a confidence and a vigor that doubles, triples, and sometimes quadruples the use-value of the hours of the new day.

Hence, anything we can do to insure sound and refreshing sleep is worth doing, anything we can buy to the same end (provided it is not habit-forming drugs) is a rare bargain. George Matthew Adams quotes a man who told him: "I bought an annuity. Now that I have bought it, I know that I have bought sleep."

One of the most important steps in providing ourselves with all the time we need is to make a special study of ourselves with relation to this problem of sleep re-creation.

A woman who holds an important position in a metropolitan department store, and who had trouble nearly every night getting to sleep because her mind was grappling with her next day's work, cured herself by reversing the process. Instead of thinking ahead, she mentally reviewed the accomplishments and satisfactions of the day just closed, "to tuck away in my spirit," as she expressed it. This proved to have a relaxing effect, and she tells me she often drifts off before she finishes her review. Her day ends on a note of accomplishment rather than worry about tomorrow.

Many people have discovered that reading a short poem or essay, or a chapter of the Bible, just before they turn off the light, clears their minds of the day's cares and they sink peacefully into their pillows.

A research scientist connected with a paint company, whose job involves long periods when he has little to show for his work, found himself worrying each night over his lack of visible progress. Blessed with a keen and active sense of humor, one night while undressing he composed this jingle

*A research man is full of fear
Because he thinks his boss may jeer,
But he should work without a tear
Because the whole wide world will cheer
And join him in a festive beer,
When he creates a brand new smear!*

As he settled into his pillow he kept repeating this until he went off to sleep with a grin on his face.

Silly, of course, but it became his specific for getting off to sleep. And certainly no sillier than counting sheep.

Each of us could profitably experiment until we have found

some specific, sound or silly, for closing the books on our day's work and drifting peacefully off to sleep.



Someone has said, "Time is the one thing we never have enough of when we are well, and too much of when we are sick."

Many of us waste time in illnesses which could have been avoided, had we used our common sense. Our minds and bodies often try to warn us that we are storing up trouble for ourselves, but we do not heed them. We are "too busy." Then one day, suddenly, we have much too much time on our hands—in bed! It may or may not be a serious illness, but it is certainly an inexcusable waste of time.

Too many of us wait until we are really ill before we consult a physician. Then we expect him to kill our pain or patch us up in a matter of hours so we can get back into circulation.

I learned a different approach from an old family doctor. "At the first symptom of any kind of illness," he advised, "even a simple headache, make up your mind that you are abusing yourself in some way, whether you realize it or not. Review everything you are doing. Check your diet, your bowels, your tongue, your pulse, your temperature, the use you are making of your eyes, and any possible neglect of normal precautions. Nature is trying to tell you something. *What?*"

"It may not be necessary for you to visit your doctor. Consult your common sense—but *listen* to what it advises!"

"If you are really ill, then give your doctor a chance to help you by calling him at once, instead of giving your illness a chance to develop complications. Tell him you are not interested in being 'fixed up', that you want to get at the *cause* of your trouble. If he recommends a physical examination, have it done promptly. No matter how busy you may be, in the end it is likely to save you much time. Nature is a powerful friend if you take her into partnership and follow her rules. But she is full of unpleasant surprises if you do not keep on good terms with her—or persist in

doing things you know well enough you should not do," he concluded.

The doctor spoke wisely

Good health is worth all the time it calls for "Putting off" so often means waking up one day to the fact that Nature is ready to punish us for our failure to take care of ourselves, or to heed her warnings. Then we lose time with a vengeance. Not just days and weeks, but in many cases months. And so often it is our own fault.

As Cecil B. de Mille so truly says, "Some of the saddest words ever written are those in the *Book of Common Prayer*: 'We have left undone those things which we ought to have done.'"¹

Certainly this applies to any neglect of our health, either because we are "too busy" to get a checkup, or because we "haven't time" to take the precautions we ought to be taking

As for our retirement years, the illnesses of age usually result from earlier abuses of the energy forms of our time, which control its use-value. Unfortunately, too few of us give any thought to this until we get well along in years and suffer a heart attack or a stroke. Then we regret our carelessness in assuming that we had an unlimited store of energy to draw on. The most effective way to store years of useful time for the last part of life is to invest our energy wisely during our active years.

Re-creation and proper attention to our health and living habits are absolutely essential in the pattern of living of each of us, if we are to enjoy life, maintain our earning capacity, and continue to make satisfactory progress.

¹ *Wisdom*, October, 1956.

Recharge the Batteries of Your Spirit

Of the four forms of energy which we can call upon to multiply the effectiveness of our hours and days, perhaps the most potent is energy-of-the-spirit. As brought out in an earlier chapter, this form of energy translates into confidence, creativeness, enthusiasm, inspiration, resourcefulness. It flows through us like an electric current, sparking our spirits and energizing us into action and accomplishment.

Suppose we think of this current as available in two different "voltages," as is household electricity with its 110-volt and 220-volt currents. The lower-voltage current of energy-of-the-spirit produces the buoyancy and drive that comes from being healthy, happy, interested in our work, ambitious to accomplish things, determined to make progress.

The higher-voltage current draws on a deeper source of power, a source outside ourselves. It is this powerful current that gives some men and women flashes of inspiration, creative ideas and concepts, the faith and courage to put through mighty undertakings, the power to influence great masses of people. It makes them leaders.

From what source comes this high-voltage current of power-of-the-spirit?

Many years ago Ralph Waldo Trine wrote a book¹ with a very big concept that the great central fact of life is our oneness with the Infinite, that to keep "in tune" with this power-outside-of-ourselves is the secret of greatness. This concept can be one of the most important elements in any individual's pattern of time-use.

Regardless of the term we use, or how we picture the Infinite, God is the supreme fact of existence. We can draw on Him for unlimited strength, courage, and power-to-achieve. To do this it is not necessary to become involved in this or that brand of theology, or to become entangled in metaphysics. We need only accept with simple faith the realization that God's attitude toward us is perfect, and that to draw on His power we have only to put ourselves in the same attitude toward Him. The Lord's Prayer expresses this attitude in four simple words. "Thy will be done."

This attitude is the secret of greatness—provided it comes from the heart.



To draw on this higher-voltage current we need only take time out from our daily and weekly routine for those spiritual activities which lift us out of ourselves and keep us "in tune with the Infinite."

This may mean attending church services, listening to inspiring sermons, singing stirring hymns. Many of us derive spiritual recreation from the weekly investment of an hour or two in worshipping with kindred souls.

Or it may mean turning to the more intimately personal practice of prayer. In one of his books, Richard Llewellyn quotes a Welsh parson's prescription for prayer: "Prayer is another name for good, clean, direct thinking. When you pray, think well what you are saying, and make your thoughts into things that are solid

¹ Trine, Ralph Waldo, *In Tune with the Infinite*. The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., Indianapolis, Indiana.

In that manner your prayer will have strength, and that strength shall become part of you, mind, body and spirit.”²



Whether we put our prayers into words or pray silently in our hearts, we will do well to ask for.

Faith in ourselves,
Courage to face our responsibilities,
Strength to carry our burdens,
Fortitude to shoulder our troubles,
Enterprise to grasp our opportunities,
Wisdom to choose wisely how we shall invest our talents and our time and energy.

Prayer requires that we look up from our work and take time to “talk with God.” There is no reason why this cannot become as natural for us as it is for the mariner to glance up at the North Star for his bearings.

Such a recharging of our batteries-of-the-spirit can be a most important part of the pattern of successful and satisfying living.

² Llewellyn, Richard, *How Green Was My Valley* Quoted with permission of the publishers, The Macmillan Company, New York. Copyright 1940.

TWELVE

Worry Should Be Left Out of the Pattern

A story is told of President Calvin Coolidge that sets a pattern for all of us in these troubled years of world-wide strife and tension.

At a time when Washington was beset with troublesome problems, a caller at the White House commented to the President that he did not seem to be worried

"You are familiar with the Constitution of the United States?" the President asked.

"Yes," replied his caller.

"Well, do you find anything in it that says a President must worry?"

When you come to think of it, there isn't any clause in the Constitution that says any of us must worry! When we do, it usually means that our worries are managing us, rather than we managing them.

Dr Eliot, whose philosophy of outwitting frustrations was described in a previous chapter, had an equally effective way of warding off his worries. In answer to a question as to how he managed to live so serenely, he said, "I try to cultivate a calm nature, *expectant of good*."

He had trained himself to expect everything about his work

and his life to turn out all right—in the long run. Meanwhile, he did not permit his mind to worry over things which *might* go wrong.

It seems to be a common human failing, whenever anything unpleasant *might* happen, for us to assume it *will* happen. We make ourselves miserable on the foolish theory that we are “steeling ourselves” against trouble by anticipating the worst. This sounds sensible in theory, but the theory crumbles when we apply our common sense. For, just about three-quarters of the time, the worst does *not* happen. Which means that the trouble-anticipator has needlessly consumed a great deal of mental and nervous energy, and in so doing has undermined the use-value of his time to no purpose whatsoever.

Even when something we fear actually does materialize, is it not enough to have it consume our energy *once*, rather than *doubling* the waste by worrying about it in advance?

Worry saps the spirit and drains the nervous system of its precious energy at an appalling rate. If each of us were equipped with a mental indicator, with a dial hand which registered our energy consumption as the dial hand of an electric meter shows the consumption of electricity, we would be startled at how rapidly this hand would move when we worry. We would be equally surprised to see how swiftly it would stop if we adjusted ourselves mentally and spiritually to our situation, and resolutely refused to worry about it.

None of us can hope to go through life without plenty of *causes* for worry; but if we capitulate to them we are sunk.

It is, of course, sensible to be sufficiently concerned over a threatening situation to take all the practical steps we can to protect ourselves from trouble. Having worked out a possible plan for meeting a problem or difficulty, no useful purpose will be served by thinking any more about it. Rather, we should get on with our affairs, conserving our energy for use when it will be needed.

Thomas Dreier writes of a Florida hermit who died at the age

of seventy-six, a serene and happy old man. Before closing his eyes for the last time he remarked, "I ain't been blue since 1912, and I forget now what worried me then!"



For most of us, having a wise philosophy is not enough. We must have a technique for implementing it. In my own case, starting with Dr. Eliot's philosophy of cultivating "a calm nature, expectant of good," years ago I added a two-step technique for actually taking worries in hand and doing my level best to manage them.

The first step is to crystallize the worry by writing on a slip of paper. "I am beginning to worry about . . ." Sometimes I find that I can't frame a convincing statement of my worry when I try to put it into words. This shows me that I face no real worry, but only a vague dread or fear, usually the result of being overly tired or a bit low in spirit. In this situation the first step has proved effective, my worry begins to evaporate and my mind to clear.

But frequently I find I *can* phrase a statement, which proves that there *is* a worry to be managed. Then it is in order to take a second step—meet the worry half way.

With many of us the natural tendency is to sit and wait for whatever it is we are dreading to catch up with us. After a time the worry wears a groove in our minds and begins to revolve in a circle, like a phonograph with the needle stuck in a groove on the record, repeating one theme endlessly. The longer we worry the deeper the groove wears. Finally a form of worry-paralysis sets in.

The effective antidote to such worry is *action*. If we start out to meet a worry halfway by *doing* something, either to ward off the development we fear or to prepare in practical fashion to meet it when it does hit us, we will lift much of the worry-load from our minds and spirits. For example.

Is there a telephone call we can make—perhaps long distance—that will relieve our minds?

Is there someone we can go to see to get the situation straightened out before it starts to fester?

Can we write a letter that will clear up a misunderstanding?

Is there a friend we can consult who will be able to help us?

Can we, for the investment of a few dollars, do something that will lift the load of our worry?

Can we plunge into some activity that will prepare us to meet the situation which we are anticipating with such dread?

Action—Action—ACTION!

This, instead of letting our worry blind us to simple steps we might be taking to relieve our minds.



On one occasion I found myself deeply worried because I had agreed to complete an important commission by a certain date. I could see that I was not going to be able to meet this promise, and my reputation was at stake. The confidence of the client was so important to me that my worry grew acute. It was interfering with my working effectiveness, thus slowing me down still more.

I realized that worry was burning energy that I ought to be using on the project I was trying to finish. What could I possibly *do* about it?

At least I could warn my client in advance. Then I would be able to work with a free mind. I reached for the telephone on my desk and put in a long-distance call.

“Just how soon do you actually need the report I am working on?” I asked.

“Oh,” he said, “any time within the next two or three weeks will be soon enough. I thought I was going away on a trip, but my plans have changed and there is no rush.”

That long-distance telephone call banished my worry and con-

served a vast amount of mental and nervous energy. I easily finished the job well ahead of the date it was needed.

Action had banished worry!



One morning I received the following letter from a man with whom I had once discussed the action technique of managing worry, which read:

You will be interested, I am sure, in how I put your "action technique" to a test a few weeks ago. As I believe you know, we have been expecting a baby in our family. My wife had been seriously ill for several weeks, and was not responding to treatment. She could hold no food on her stomach. Every day she grew thinner and weaker. I was genuinely worried—more worried than I have ever been in my life.

Last Tuesday morning I woke up with the realization that here was a situation calling for *action*. If I couldn't do anything else, at least I would find out the worst. Anything but this terrible uncertainty.

I called the doctor and made an appointment to see him privately in his office. "I want the unvarnished truth," I told him.

"Well, frankly," said the doctor, "I had thought there would be a turn for the better in your wife's condition by now. If there is no improvement by the time I make my regular call at your house tomorrow afternoon, I fear the baby will have to be taken to save your wife's life."

Dark as the prospects were, all the way home I felt better for having boldly taken the situation in hand. I was so relieved at the thought that there would be action by the next day that I entered my wife's sickroom with a strong sense of confidence.

"Well, I dropped in at the doctor's this afternoon," I announced cheerfully. Then, on a sudden impulse, I said, "He told me there really ought to be a definite turn for the better by the time he calls tomorrow afternoon."

I noticed a flicker of hope in her eyes at the license I had taken with the doctor's statement, and went on boldly, "From now on you should begin to improve rapidly."

Before morning there was a marked change for the better in her condition. I called the doctor and posted him on what I had

told my wife, and on its effect. When he called that afternoon he found her sitting up in bed for the first time in weeks. And she had taken a little solid food.

"The turn I had hoped for has come," he announced briskly. "You are definitely on the mend. You'll be up and around in a week."

His prediction proved accurate. Thanks to turning a fearsome worry into action, my amateur psychology did what medicines had not been able to do. We are expecting the baby any day now. I am all for the "action technique." It works!

This intimate letter has been quoted in full, with the consent of my correspondent, because it illustrates three important points.

First, that action brings mental relief. Even though this man learned that the baby might have to be taken, the very fact that something was going to be *done* broke his worry-paralysis.

Second, that going into action stimulates our resourcefulness, and frequently results in bold and creative thinking.

Third, that when we take action on a worry, what we start to do may not be the thing we end doing. In fact, our action may veer off in an entirely different direction than we intended. Once we start out boldly to meet a worry half way, it is surprising how often an unexpected path opens up.

It has been my observation that the action technique works with all kinds of worries—business and professional, home and family, financial, health and personal. It is an amazingly successful method of outwitting worry and quickly ending a reckless waste of energy of mind and spirit.



Of course, there are situations in which we are powerless to take any sensible action. But worry will not help. As Trotty Veck put it so wisely, "There are two things about which one should never worry: that which cannot be helped and that which can be." The latter we can *do* something about. And we should.

Abraham Lincoln led a tragic life in a troubled era. He had to grapple with superhuman problems. He was misunderstood,

bitterly criticized, and unjustly maligned. But he had a philosophy which kept his spirit from curdling and his mind from burning itself out with worry. Happily it has been preserved for us in his own words:

I do the very best I know how—the very best I can, and I mean to keep doing so until the end.

If the end brings me out all right, what is said against me won't amount to anything.

If the end brings me out wrong, then ten angels swearing I was right would make no difference.



No discussion of worry would be complete without reminding ourselves that we often make ourselves miserable worrying over some anticipated trouble, only to have it turn out to be a blessing in disguise.

Some years ago I made a list of the seven major worries of my life up to that time. I traced what had actually happened. To my surprise, five of these anticipated troubles, which at the time had loomed as almost catastrophic, had worked out to be great good fortune. And the other two had been far less serious in their consequences than I had anticipated. It was then that I adopted Dr. Eliot's sound philosophy of cultivating "a calm nature expectant of good."

Definitely, worry is one thing that should be *left out* of the pattern for truly successful living!

THIRTEEN

Be Human— Reward Yourself!

Of all the factors that make up the pattern of living, perhaps none is quite so important to our daily and hourly happiness as the practice of *rewarding ourselves*, in little ways and big, as part of our routine.

When, for example, we manage to do something so quickly that, unexpectedly, we have a bit of time left over, we can afford to reward ourselves by indulging, even if only momentarily, in some activity that will give us special pleasure, instead of over-conscientiously keeping on plugging.

When we complete a big job that may have taken us days or weeks, if it is at all possible it will profit us to reward ourselves by taking a day off to do something which will refresh us in mind and spirit.

One of my New York friends took an early plane to Boston one morning on business. So carefully had he planned his mission that, instead of taking the whole day as he had anticipated, his assignment was completed before noon. His first impulse was to take the first plane back to New York.

Recalling a discussion we had had on the rewarding idea, he decided that this was a fine opportunity to test it. Accordingly, he resolved to give himself a half-holiday and do some of the

things he had long wanted to do in Boston. First he telephoned an old college friend and found that he had a free lunch hour. They lunched at one of the famous eating places in the Faneuil Hall section and had a fine visit. After lunch he visited Faneuil Hall, the Old State House, and the Old North Church. There was still time for an hour at the Museum of Fine Arts before taking a plane back to New York. He arrived home, thoroughly refreshed in mind and spirit, at the time he had originally expected to return.

Should not all of us take advantage of every opportunity to give ourselves such little unexpected holidays for our good behavior in wisely using our time? Often an unanticipated hour of complete freedom to follow our inclinations will do us more good than much longer conventional periods of leisure.

It behooves us all to maintain a sound sense of proportion in the investment of our days and hours, and to remember that our spirits need refreshment as much as do our bodies. Is there a better way to give ourselves a spiritual lift than to surprise ourselves at frequent intervals with wholly unexpected "vacations" that have been earned as a result of the intelligent use of our time?



Of course, the rewarding idea can be overdone. Life is a matter of keeping a sensible balance between work and play, accomplishments and rewards. If we see to it that the accomplishment comes *first*, we can safely indulge in an appropriate reward.

One of the fallacies that dilutes our happiness is that we think we are not "working" unless what we are doing seems like work. Yet, as we have already discovered, some of our very best work is done when our minds and spirits are so relaxed that we hardly realize we are working.

It is not the hours we spend at work that count, but how much we actually accomplish. When we learn to accomplish more by working less we will begin to mature.

Perhaps the quickest way to learn this valuable lesson is to reward ourselves on every possible occasion—even if only with a ten-minute vacation—when we succeed in lopping off minutes or hours from some task because of our efficient handling of it. We need to keep ourselves reminded that life is speeding by and watch for every possible opportunity to pause and savor it, even if only briefly.



The practice of rewarding ourselves becomes much simpler if we adopt the “project” concept in connection with our work. If we “draw a mental circle” around a task so that we see it as a project, we will know when we have completed it, or at least carried it as far as we can for the time being. We should then take our bearings and see if this is not a time when we can justifiably reward ourselves.

Going back to the master craftsman in metals, mentioned in an earlier chapter, who mentally packages his projects, he once told me that whenever he finished his pre-allotted day’s work ahead of schedule he almost automatically considered three courses:

- Continuing to work on the project, tackling some other part of it, or
- Turning to another project; or
- Taking a brief “vacation”

“Oftener than not,” he says, “I adopt the third course, for I believe I am entitled to indulge myself a bit when I have finished a piece of work. But there are times when tackling some other part of the design I am working on, or starting another project, will give me more pleasure than anything else I could possibly do with the ‘vacation’ I have earned. When I find myself in this mood, I push on. For at such times I can work easily and make fast progress.”

This brings out the importance of mood. Sometimes, when we

are engaged in a piece of work that is proving thoroughly enjoyable, we may be in a mood to "make a short job long for the love of it," to quote from a poem by Robert Frost. To keep on working from a conscientious sense of putting in so many hours is to throw away the rewards of our labor, but to linger over an undertaking that is giving us pleasure is sometimes the finest possible way to reward ourselves.



The wonderful thing about indulging ourselves in little reward-dividends is that, as already stressed, our subconscious minds work best when we are doing something particularly pleasurable. That is why some of our best ideas come to us when we are mentally relaxed and enjoying ourselves, with a sense of having earned the right to a brief respite.

Reminding myself to practice what I preach, one day recently at a few minutes after twelve I had covered three errands in the city which I had assumed would take the whole day. Instead of contenting myself with a quick lunch and hurrying back to the office and plunging into an afternoon of work, I decided to reward myself. I went to my favorite club and ordered an epicurean luncheon. As I sat eating in leisurely fashion, enjoying a sense of well-being, an idea popped into my mind for a chapter for this book covering an aspect of time-use which had not previously occurred to me. I made a note of it and continued my luncheon.

As I was leaving the club a quarter of an hour later I bethought myself of an exhibit of graphic arts in a nearby gallery. I decided to continue to reward myself by visiting this gallery. As I stood looking at one of the exhibits, a phrase on the title page of one of the fine books on display suggested a solution to a problem that had been bothering me for months. I left the gallery with that problem on the way to solution.

On my way uptown my eye was caught by the display in a haberdasher's window. Two neckties attracted me. "Why not

reward myself with two new ties, while I am in the rewarding mood?" I asked myself. So I did just that.

Toward the latter part of the afternoon I returned to my office, thoroughly refreshed in mind and spirit, and with two ideas I might never have conceived while at my desk. Also, with two neckties which in the future will remind me pleasantly of a day well spent!

Living is a very human occupation, and it behooves us to be human with ourselves whenever an opportunity presents itself.



The wonderful thing about such little reward-vacations is that often they stimulate our minds as well as our spirits, and frequently result in making light work of the tasks facing us. In the end, we accomplish more with our hours and days—and our lives—if we grasp the fleeting opportunities to reward ourselves for the wise use of our hours and energy, than if we keep our noses too close to the grindstone of duty.

Those of us whose working days are so ordered that there is no feasible way of rewarding ourselves during business hours should watch for opportunities to do so at other times. If, while we are engaged in an especially difficult or unpleasant task, we begin to think of rewarding ourselves in some way after working hours, we are apt to find the task less difficult or unpleasant. But, even on the job, there are usually opportunities to lean back and relax, to turn briefly to contacts with people around us whom we particularly like, to stop and enjoy a leisurely smoke, or to spend a little time reading.

Life should properly be a balance of accomplishments and rewards, of work and fun. We should get enjoyment out of doing our work well and meeting and mastering our problems, and then we will be wise to take time out to reward ourselves by engaging in some special pleasure.

What could be more sensible as part of the pattern for truly successful living?

Section Two—Refresher Check List

In front of each concept or method is a space in which to pencil a key letter:

R—I want to remember this and adopt it as part of my philosophy or pattern of time-use.

T—I want to try this out and see if it fits my needs.

A—I definitely want to take action on this idea or to adopt (or adapt) this method or technique.

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ONE

Stop, Look, and Listen to Life

Each of us is born into a world of infinite interest and possibilities. If we live to the allotted three score and ten we can anticipate 613,200 hours to invest in life. Awake or asleep they can contribute to our happiness and our accomplishment and progress.

Too many of us are letting these precious hours slip past, only half lived. To live fully we must (1) keep up with our times, (2) work out a working-and-living pattern that fits our individual temperaments and situations, (3) develop working and living habits that utilize our hours and days to the fullest possible advantage. These are the minimum requisites for a program for personal progress.

The first problem we face, then, is "keeping up."

Never in the history of man have there been so many facilities available for keeping abreast of ideas and events. The newspapers serve us the news from every corner of the globe, radio and television provide us with a front seat at important events, magazines and books keep us posted on what people everywhere are doing, thinking, dreaming. We can avail ourselves of lectures, art exhibits, conventions, concerts, sermons, plays, movies, scientific society meetings—the list is almost endless.

All these facilities can help us to *live*. Probably the reason most of us do not take fuller advantage of them is because there are so many of them that they tend to make life confusing. Because we cannot avail ourselves of *all* of them, we excuse ourselves for not availing ourselves of as many as we might. We allow ourselves to drift through the hours and days and weeks. We are conscious that we are missing much of life, but in too many instances we live in our own little backwater coves until some alert person with a contagious zest for living almost drags us out into the stream of life, to attend an important event, read a significant book, go to an outstanding play or movie, or participate in some worth-while community event. The world owes much to these enterprising people. They are the stirrer-uppers.



The seventeen-year-old daughter of a neighbor put me to shame in the matter of keeping abreast and programming her time. This young lady always seems to know what is going on. Mention an important new book and she has either read it or read a review of it. Mention an outstanding movie and more than likely she has seen it. Mention an important current event and she is familiar with it. Whistle the latest tune and she knows what it is.

"How does she do it?" I asked her mother. "She has no more time than other girls, but she keeps abreast of the world better than almost anyone I know."

"Her system is quite simple," her mother explained. "She plans her activities for days ahead. On Sunday morning she curls up on the couch with *The New York Times* and a pad and pencil. First she studies the radio and television pages and notes the programs she wants to tune in during the week. She jots down the date, the station and the time of each program.

"Next, she turns to the book review section and reads it quite carefully. If there is a review or an advertisement of any book she very much wants to read, she notes it. On Monday she visits the

lending library or the public library and puts in a request for it, or takes it out if it is already available

"Before she gets through with the Sunday paper she has skimmed the news pages, the society section, and the art and music pages. If there is a special art exhibit she wants to see, or a lecture or musical event that interests her, she makes a note of the date, time, and place—and it is surprising how many of these she takes in, either alone or with friends.

"Then she goes through our weekly suburban paper in the same way, posting herself on local doings. And, of course, she looks up the movies that are to be shown at our two local movie houses. If there is a conflict between a movie and a television program, she decides which she would rather see and plans accordingly."

"How about the boys?" I asked.

"I was just coming to the boys. She seems to understand the feminine art of getting herself invited to the movies she wants to see, or the sports events or parties she wants to attend. And she is clever at getting boys interested in the television programs she wants to watch. She carries her young crowd along with her—'general manages' them, in a manner of speaking—and they seem to like it. There is never a dull moment around Barbara!"

Because she knows exactly what she wants to do and see and hear and read, this young lady lives life to the full. What is more, she enjoys a position of leadership in her set.



Such meticulous planning of a week would not appeal to some people. But, without scheduling ourselves quite so tightly, all of us could with profit plan ahead much more carefully than we do, making the engagements that are important to us, choosing the books we want to read, the movies we want to see, the radio and television programs we want to tune in, the places we want to go, the people we want to entertain or visit. Such scheduling

would utilize our time much more advantageously than most of us now use it

We are too prone to drift along from hour to hour and day to day, permitting ourselves to be enticed into fitting into other people's plans. It would pay all of us to plan much more definitely to take advantage of life's opportunities, with a program of our own making.



The essence of wise time-use is to develop a definite sense of values for ourselves, and then to have the self-discipline to live up to it. It is sometimes necessary to say a courteous but firm "No" to the things other people want us to do, in order to have time to do the things that will result in our own greatest happiness and progress. After all, we have only one life to live. Every hour we waste is an hour gone forever.

To manage our time and carry out our own plans does not mean that we must be selfish or uncooperative. But sometimes we must be graciously firm in meeting the demands of our family, our friends, and our business or professional associates.

One father has always been an object lesson to me. This man has a good many evening engagements. At the same time, he is following a rather ambitious course of reading to prepare himself for a new responsibility he is anticipating in his business life. His problem is to work on his reading, for his enterprising family would absorb all his free evenings if he did not protect himself.

How does he manage it? Well, for example, at dinner one evening the older children suggested that he and their mother go to see a certain movie with them. He deeply appreciated their wanting him to join them, at the same time he did want to get on with the book he was reading currently, for this evening his mind was fresh and he felt up to solid reading.

"I'll trade you tomorrow night or the next," he told the youngsters. "I have a reading stint to do tonight."

They looked up the film and found that it would be showing for the next two nights. So they decided definitely to go the next night. Thus his evening was saved for his reading, and he had the pleasurable anticipation of going out with his family the following night.



A New York lawyer who serves on eight boards of directors, and on special committees of several of them, as well as being on numerous civic committees, has a personal program which calls for a considerable portion of his time. His problem is also complicated by the fact that he must avoid conflicts in meeting dates of his various boards and committees.

When a date is being set for any board or committee meeting, he takes out his vest-pocket engagement book. If the fifteenth of the month, say, has been suggested for the next meeting, and if that date either conflicts with another meeting or interferes with his personal plans, he never mentions the conflict but merely asks, "Would either the fourteenth, sixteenth, or eighteenth be as convenient for the rest of you?"

He reports that more often than not it develops that one of these dates is just as convenient. In fact, frequently other members volunteer that the new date will suit them very much better.

It is surprising how often we can serve our own time-convenience, while satisfying our family or friends and meeting our business or professional obligations, by offering an alternate time. The world seems ready to accommodate itself to the person who schedules his time and insists—albeit graciously and always with due regard for the convenience of others—on carrying out his program.

On the other hand, the easy-going person who readily changes his own plans to accommodate others often loses out on his own

plans, yet gets no particular credit for his easy acquiescence

Whenever the outside world attempts to divert us from our plans and purposes, we might well make it a habit to **STOP**, **LOOK**, and **LISTEN** to life.

—*Stop* and consider what the diversion will mean to us,

—*Look* at the clock or the calendar and see if some other hour or day will not serve the others concerned quite as well,

—*Listen* to the ticking of the Clock-of-Our-Lives, and realize that time is passing and we must use our allotment wisely, or we will fall far short of our personal potentials.



This last aspect of the problem of making personal progress suggests that every so often—perhaps four times a year at the change of the seasons—we might with profit push our lives off and take a fresh look at them, asking ourselves.

Just what am I trying to get out of life?

Am I using my time and energy wisely?

Am I getting the satisfactions I seek?

Am I making the progress I should be making?

The chances are we will not be too happy about our answers to these questions. With the firmest intentions in the world, in the hurly-burly of daily living we tend to lose sight of our objectives. We permit ourselves to be short-changed in the matter of satisfactions, accomplishments, and progress by fitting too readily into other people's demands on us.

If we begin to challenge these demands, we will be surprised to discover what a fund of time and energy we will add to our precious store by resolutely sloughing off any activities which do not contribute to our personal aims and interests.

This challenging process is as important as any habit we can

cultivate Followed consistently—but always with due consideration for the rights and interests of others—it is perhaps the biggest single thing we can do toward making both the clock and energy forms of our time serve us to the full.

TWO

The Habit of Doing Important Things FIRST

There is an even worse tyranny than that of the clock. It is the tyranny of convention in our use of our time. Unless we free ourselves from this tyranny we might just as well make up our minds that for us there definitely is neither time enough nor energy enough for the good life we would like to live. In fact, if we lack the gumption to boss the clock we are hardly entitled to a life of happiness, accomplishment, and progress.

Why should we let other people's conventional ideas of when we should do things, or how we should use our time, establish our habits of life or work?

The tyrant, Convention, seems to do his best to get us off to a wrong start every morning. If we succumb we are likely to rob our day of a great deal of its time-value.

The conventional approach of a housewife, for example, is to get her routine housework out of the way before she turns to any major project or indulges in any activity that would make the day very much worth living.

The businessman's conventional approach is to read his morning mail before he takes up the important business of the day.

In both cases, the result is that the freshest hour or two of the

day is consumed in routine activities, instead of with concerns which might mean much in accomplishment and progress.



To get off to a fast start it is usually necessary to defy convention. A well-known woman writer once told me that for years she wasted at least two hours every morning before really getting down to work.

"I could think of a dozen things I ought to do around the house first. The dishes had to be washed. The beds had to be made. Then I had to sweep and dust. Then there was my shopping list to make up, and so on and on, before getting to my writing. At long last I was ready—or *almost* ready. First I must sharpen all my lead pencils. Then there were likely to be two or three telephone calls I would decide to make before settling down to work. By then it would be mid-morning, and much of my steam would be used up. As a result of getting off to such a slow start, often I would have to work in the evening to meet my commitments.

"One evening while working to make up for a particularly late morning start, I was called away from my desk in the middle of a paragraph. I didn't get back to finish it. Next morning I was so impatient to finish that paragraph that I went right from the breakfast table to my desk. Finishing the paragraph, I kept on writing, oblivious to the housework I was neglecting. First thing I knew, I had finished a chapter of my book that I had expected would take me the whole day—and it was not yet noon!

"I was so pleased with myself that I breezed through my household chores, fixed myself a sandwich and a cup of tea for lunch, and at one o'clock was back at my desk. By five-thirty, when I called it a day, I had made a good start on another chapter.

"My experience of the night before, in leaving off in the middle of a paragraph, had given me a clue. I did this again at the close of my workday, and again the next morning I found it easy to pick up where I had left off. Now I always leave off my writing

in the middle of a paragraph when I lay down my pencil for the day. Next morning I am eager to get at it, for nearly always I have thought how I want to finish the paragraph—and start the next one. Once the ice is broken I keep on writing, with none of the old agony of getting my train of thought started.”

I promptly tried this woman's stopping-in-the-middle technique in my own writing and found that it worked. It is now standard practice with me—but I usually stop in the middle of a sentence rather than a paragraph.

This same technique can also be used effectively with other types of work. It is a natural tendency with most of us to try to finish any job we are working on before stopping for the day. Frequently this is the wise thing to do. But stopping short of completion, especially if we see just how to finish a job, often makes it easy to pick up the next morning. By the time we finish the uncompleted job we are in momentum and usually we take on the next job effortlessly, instead of having to resort to forced draft to build up a head of steam.

Another aspect is that, when we leave a task short of completion, our subconscious minds continue to work on it overnight, and sometimes develop ideas that make it easier to finish it when we resume, and perhaps even suggest improvements on the portion we have already completed.

This is a technique that must be used with discretion; but it is worth a test.



But the mechanical aspect of stopping-in-the-middle is only half of the secret of the effectiveness of this woman author's discovery. The other half is the resulting defiance of convention. Getting up from the breakfast table, after putting the cream and butter in the refrigerator, she goes right to her desk. The housework and telephoning have to wait until she has put in two or three hours at her desk. She tells me that often she gets as much writing done in these two or three fresh morning hours as she

used to get done in a whole day. Her mental energy—to say nothing of her energy-of-the-spirit—is so high that her mind is creative and eager to get to work

Many women could with profit adopt this technique of bossing their housework instead of letting it boss them. Why should any woman be a slave to convention at the cost of living a happy, productive, and satisfying life?



Businessmen might well ask themselves the same question.

The businessman's morning mail was referred to earlier as commonly receiving his first consideration. Like the housewife's dish-washing and bed-making, this is largely a matter of convention.

A fiction story published several years ago dealt with a company president who gave orders that the morning mail was henceforth not to be distributed to the firm's executives until one o'clock in the afternoon. The reason for this arbitrary action was the president's conviction that, like himself, the other executives arrived at their offices in the morning fresh and full of plans for the day. But on their desks was their morning mail. It proceeded to take charge of them.

In one executive's mail there might be a letter complaining about a delayed shipment. He would let everything else wait while he started to trace down the trouble. By the time he had upset three other people and all but ruined the morning for them, as well as for himself, it would be nearly noon. Too late, of course, to undertake the project he had planned for that morning.

Another executive's mail might contain a letter complimenting the firm on the fine job it had done in some special situation. He would be so pleased that he would start down the executive corridor to share the letter with his associates. His intention would be excellent, but he would end by visiting with each of them so long that their minds were taken off their own plans for

the morning. By the time he returned to his own office it would be too late to undertake any important project before lunch.

Letters in the morning mail of other executives would interfere, for one reason or another, with their getting off to a fast start with special projects of their own. Too often they had lost their steam by the time they had taken care of their mail.

"This organization is being bossed by the morning mail," declared this president, "and it's going to stop."

Under his "One O'clock Mail" edict, while orders and routine mail were distributed in the appropriate departments, all the executives faced the morning with nothing on their desks to prevent them from starting new undertakings while their minds were keen. When they returned from lunch the morning mail was on their desks to give them a fresh start for the afternoon. Seldom did any important matter suffer from the four-hour delay. There was still ample time to answer urgent letters that day, or to wire or telephone in emergency situations.



While this story was pure fiction, the problem it deals with is real, and the pattern is almost universal in the business world. The conventional time to read the morning mail is first thing in the morning. Whereas the sensible time to read it would be after important projects of real consequence to the business had been well launched.

The executive who devotes the fresh first hour in the morning to the most important project facing him is sure of a morning of progress. And he is likely to discover that the rest of his day is gratifyingly productive.



All of us need to adjust our minds to the basic values in our own particular lives, and let other people live their lives as conventionally as they choose. We ought boldly to skip some of the routine things which, all our lives, we have been doing first thing

in the morning. It would be a wholesome exercise for each of us to challenge everything we now do during the first working hour of the day with the question: Is this sufficiently important for me to attend to *first*?

We should also study our temperaments and ask ourselves: Just what would get me off to the best start every morning? A little experimenting would probably develop a surprising answer to this question.

In his biography of Thomas A. Edison, C. B. Wall tells of the novel way "the Wizard of Menlo Park" started his day. "No matter how hard the driving pace of his working day, Edison never lost his relish for humor. During the war when he was working under the greatest pressure, he always asked to see the 'dispatch case' each morning. This was a telegraphed roundup of the day's best jokes then going the rounds in Washington and New York. Edison spread out the jokes and chortled over them before beginning the day's work. Often, an associate recalls, his laugh was 'a roar you could hear all over the place'."¹

Edison got his spirit "turning over" before he took on the day's responsibilities.

The trouble with many of us is that we are so convention-bound in our work-habits that we think we "haven't time" to start with the plan, project, or activity that would get us off to the fastest start for the day.



Probably few human beings have ever carried a heavier load, or had so many demands on their time, than did President Woodrow Wilson during World War I. He sorely needed exercise in the fresh air to keep his body fit and his mind alert. But with the burdens of the Presidency, and the crowded calendar of callers he faced each morning, how could he possibly find the time for even a few minutes' exercise?

¹ Wall, C. B., *Incandescent Genius*. Published in *The Reader's Digest*, April, 1954. Copyright 1954 by The Reader's Digest Assn. Quoted with permission.

He solved this problem by taking a brisk twenty-minute walk every morning before going to his White House Office. He knew that once he became involved in the routine of the day he would never be able to get away from his desk. So he took his walk *first*.

This is the simple secret of making the greatest progress every day: to do the most important thing *first*. In all probability we will have to fly in the face of habit and convention. Why not? We have but one life to live. Why should we let other people's conventional ideas control our time and interfere with our progress?

If we take firm charge of our days, by insisting on doing the most important thing *first*, we will discover that other people will respect our time. They may think us a bit queer, but they will leave us alone in our queerness.

A businessman who lets it be understood that he is available to associates and callers after ten o'clock, but not before, will soon find that he is seldom bothered until ten.

A housewife who lets it be known that, much as she loves her neighbors and friends, she is "not receiving" before ten in the morning will seldom be interrupted until after that hour.



The head of a small but prosperous New York advertising agency has adopted the plan of spending his first hour behind closed doors. Before even glancing at his mail he concentrates on reviewing the advertising plans his associates have completed the day before. Since all plans must have his okay before being submitted to clients, he considers this his most important responsibility. So he puts it *first*.

His secretary tells callers, "Mr. Brown will be in shortly after ten o'clock." This lets them know when he will be available. Meanwhile they can use their own time to advantage.

After all, why should any businessman let other people run—and often all but ruin—his day by following conventional office practices? His success depends on what he can accomplish be-

tween nine and five, not on how many people he sees or how many times he answers the telephone, or how many conferences he sits in, or how much correspondence he handles.

The way to start is to *start*. The road to Mecca is strewn with the wrecked hopes of men and women who let the fresh hours of the morning slip by them only half-used. To do *first* what is most important makes sense as a pattern for working, as well as for living



We sometimes hear people say, "I'm no good for the first hour or two in the morning." This may be quite true—but only because they have permitted themselves to form the habit of *thinking* so. To cure this habit, they have only to substitute the habit—which will be mechanical at first—of hopping out of bed in the morning, splashing their faces with cold water, and asking themselves briskly. "What is the most important thing for me to do *first* today?"

The man who recommended this method to me says he knows it to be effective because for years he indulged himself in the lazy luxury of excusing himself from really functioning until about eleven o'clock in the morning. In fact, he said he had rather prided himself on this idiosyncrasy.

"One day," he relates, "a friend asked me a brutal question: 'How can you respect yourself when you are throwing away the two best hours of the morning—the two hours that give you a head start for the day?' That question brought me up short. I asked him how he started the day. He explained his hopping-out-of-bed, cold-splash, brisk-question technique. I tried it, protestingly at first, but soon began to like getting off to a fast start. The result is that I usually have a fair day's work done by eleven o'clock. Now I wouldn't trade the first two hours of the morning for any other four hours in the day. They are the golden hours."

There is another exceedingly important reason for getting off

to a fast start in the morning; so many things can happen by midmorning to upset the day's program. We may have the firmest intentions with respect to a plan or project that is important to us. Along comes an unexpected—and often inescapable—interruption which proves frustrating, if not downright irritating. The result is that we begin consuming the nervous-energy form of our time at such a rate that the accomplishment-value of our hours is greatly reduced.

Sometimes the interruption is of such a character that it throws all our plans for the day out of joint. A major plan or project which we intended starting has to be postponed until next day, with the result that a whole day of progress is lost to us. We still must get up steam to tackle the project tomorrow. Yet tomorrow may be full of engagements and responsibilities which again prevent our making a start on the neglected plan or project. So it must be carried over to another tomorrow—and perhaps another—and another.

Until we resolutely take charge of our days, and turn our backs firmly on habit and convention, we will not have mastered the first rudimentary steps in the intelligent use of our time. Nor will we get the full benefit of the energy of our minds and spirits. And it is these forms of energy which enable us to tackle tough problems with vigor and confidence. They give us our drive. Hence the overwhelming importance of attacking the most important task *first*.

The minute we say to ourselves, "I'll just take care of this little chore first," we are lost. For then we are sure to think of just one more little thing we ought to do first—and one more—and one more.

To be effective—to boss the clock as the clock must be bossed if we are to have all the time we need—we must literally *plunge* into the activity that means the most to us in satisfaction, accomplishment, or progress.

The cold-splash approach may not appeal to us as the way to get started—*fast*. But all of us know ourselves well enough to

work out *some* specific for quick early-morning acceleration. If we make that a habit we will just about double the value of a great many of our days.

This battle—and it is a battle—will have to be fought every morning until doing the most important thing first becomes second nature. Indeed, even after the habit is fairly well established, it will take all the “won’t-power” we can muster to keep from backsliding.

Starting the day *fast* is one of the most effective ways we can help ourselves to all the time we need. In doing so we are presenting ourselves with “the greatest gift in the world.”

THREE

To Master Those Dreaded Jobs

It is safe to say that none of us escapes our quota of difficult or unpleasant jobs that we dread to tackle. We keep putting them off, seemingly in the vain hope that they will take care of themselves. The longer we procrastinate the bigger they loom, and the more we dread taking them on. But eventually we have to roll up our sleeves, literally or figuratively, and wade into them.

Why put them off? To develop the habit of boldly going out to meet such jobs, instead of trying to hide from them, is to add hours and hours of time to our days and weeks, to say nothing of conserving ergs and ergs of our energy.

The bigger the person, seemingly, the more of a problem this is. The reason is, of course, that big people face big tasks, many of them desperately difficult.

There is no single specific for overcoming this human propensity. Sometimes we have literally to *order* ourselves to "get going." At other times we must argue, lure, coax, or even trick ourselves into action.

In exploring this area, I encountered a number of interesting techniques. A prominent business executive who seems never to put off his dreaded jobs confided to me that during half his business life he had struggled to overcome his "pushing-off" habit.

"I could think of a dozen things that I ought to do first, though I knew perfectly well that none of them was really important. This constitutional antipathy for tackling such projects bothered me no end. Then, one evening I found at least a partial cure. While I was reading an absorbing biography my mind kept popping ideas. It occurred to me then that reading about other men's struggles and achievements invariably stimulated my mind and spirit.

"Why shouldn't I keep a biography in my office to dip into when I have trouble getting started on a dreaded job?" I asked myself. Next morning I took to my office the biography I was reading at the time—and I've kept one in a drawer of my desk ever since. Whenever I see one of these dreaded tasks looming on my horizon, and experience the telltale symptoms of rationalizing myself into thinking that some other time would be better, whatever time of day it is I close my office door and tell my secretary I will be 'out' for a while, reach for my biography and start reading. By the end of a chapter I begin to experience a sense of stimulation. A second chapter nearly always puts me in a what-other-men-can-do-I-can mood. I visualize myself as engaged in laying the foundation for my own autobiography, and tell myself I'd better get started on a fresh chapter. Whereupon I get going! Seems silly for a grown man to have to resort to so mechanical a method of getting up steam," he laughed, "but it works for me."

I told him I didn't think it silly at all, and admitted that for several years I have used an adaptation of this technique.

Instead of a biography, my specific is *The Reader's Digest*. I have found that picking up a copy of this little magazine and reading two or three articles gets my mental machinery turning over and produces a let-me-at-it reaction.

One October day on a plane flight from Chicago to Boston, for example, I had an important report to write which I had dreaded for several days, and put aside to do on this plane trip because

I would be able to work without interruption. But my mind still balked. It was a sparkling morning and it was so very pleasant to look down on the colorful fall landscape!

What to do about it? That report simply had to be ready for a conference the first thing next morning

Suddenly I bethought myself of my little "Automatic Stimulator." It happened that we were just landing at Cleveland. I hurried to the airport newsstand and bought a copy of *The Reader's Digest*.

After reading two brief articles and three or four episodes of "Life in These United States," I closed the magazine, took out my pencil and was off to a flying start on my report. When the plane's wheels touched the runway at Logan Airport, Boston, I was writing the final sentence

The explanation is, I believe, that this magazine gives me a sense of being out in the stream of life where men and women are doing interesting and important things. My mind begins to turn over rapidly. Ideas come easily

Having a sense of being in the stream of life is, I suspect, basically important to most of us in making progress. We need the stimulation of being in competition with other people, of being part of the times in which we are living, of playing a modest part in the Ultimate Scheme of Things.



A brusque, seemingly hard-boiled corporation vice-president, with a reputation for wading into the toughest kind of assignments without the loss of an hour, attracted my attention. I asked him how he managed to boss himself so successfully

"I don't boss myself, I get help," he replied cryptically.

"What kind of help?" I asked.

He looked at me as though not quite certain of my reaction, and then blurted rather self-consciously, "When I face a 'toughie' I pray for the guts to tackle it, and then I plunge in"

So prayer was his specific And why not? If we can get help from outside of ourselves, why should we not avail ourselves?



Another man who seems to do an excellent job of bossing himself with respect to put-off jobs confesses that he doesn't boss himself, he *tricks* himself

"Instead of plunging headfirst into a dreaded task," he says, "I stick a tentative toe into the cold water to get the feel of it. 'I won't actually take on this job just now,' I assure myself, 'I'll just make a few notes of what's to be done when I do tackle it in earnest' Or, 'I'll just get the tools out so I'll be all ready' At least half the time this gets me so deeply interested that before I know it the job is done!

"Another time I assure myself that I'll just do one little piece of some big job—just to get it *started* Only to find, several hours later, that I'm pretty well along with it, and wouldn't stop for anything until it is finished!"



Another technique for getting started on a dreaded job is to make a few notes of what's to be done. This gives us a perspective on the job facing us. We see it in its entirety and can then more readily "draw a mental circle around it" as a project We visualize it as a "wrapped package"

Making notes also helps us to break the project down into small sub-projects, which are easier to start because we can see how to finish one of these in no time at all This lures us almost painlessly into becoming involved And one sub-project leads to another, until we find that we have made quite a bit of progress on the undertaking without realizing that we were any more than toying with it We may even finish it, without quite realizing how we became involved in it.

This tricking technique is intriguing! By making a game of sneaking up on the toughest kind of jobs, we add zest to our days.

It is my experience that it works with all kinds of plans and projects, in our work, at home, and in community activities. To cultivate the habit of getting these bullying jobs behind us is to conserve mental energy which we might otherwise wastefully devote to dreading.



As we watch the months and years slip past us, and measure our progress against that of our most successful friends and associates, it becomes apparent that one of our most important concerns should be to develop the habit of coming to grips *promptly* with our dreaded jobs, for to do so helps to keep us in momentum.

Losing momentum, whether in our work, our social or civic activities, or our household routine, usually results in using much more time to do something that could have been accomplished easily and quickly if done at the time it should have been.

The energy-cost of losing momentum is prodigious. Every time we think of our put-off jobs, we consume a few more units of mental energy, which produces a sense of frustration that seriously reduces our over-all efficiency.

Contrariwise, when we develop the habit of maintaining our momentum we enjoy a positive lift of mind and spirit. We seem to do the dreaded must-be-done things easily, and to have time for the outside things we want to do. We are in firm control of our lives.



I have a second specific that I often employ when I find myself approaching a job with an attitude of I-suppose-I-must-get-at-this-but-how-I-dread-it. I remind myself of a certain Monday morning when, as a boy, I had been sent on an errand to a cobbler's shop run by an old German, who was a philosopher as well as a cobbler.

In his shop he had several machines, all of them connected by

belts to an overhead pulley-shaft which was constantly revolving. To start any machine he had to throw a lever which slipped its belt onto the already-revolving overhead pulley.

The old man was putting on his leather apron when I entered his shop "I feel like I was a thousand years old this morning," he grumbled "Seems as if I just couldn't start another week's work if I was to be hung for it. But do you know what?" he continued, a broad smile spreading over his face, "Starting a new week is like starting up one of my machines. It always screeches when I throw the belt on. Then it moans for a few seconds, then the machine gets interested in its work and the belt begins to hum!"

With that he grabbed the lever that shifted the belt onto the pulley which drove the machine he was about to use. It behaved just as he had said—it screeched for a minute, then moaned, then settled down to a businesslike hum.

I have never forgotten that visit to the cobbler's shop. Hundreds of times I have used the memory to create a work mood to tackle an unwanted chore.



It will pay any person to make a special study of the kind of tasks he dreads and tends to put off. Then to study himself as a problem-in-activation. What personal specific can he develop that will quickly put him in a let-me-at-it mood? Let him make a habit of using this specific and he will make much faster progress toward his Mecca.

FOUR

Develop a Faster Working Tempo

Some of us could save a respectable percentage of the time we spend on our daily routine simply by stepping up the tempo of our motions. While many of us are naturally fast and sure in our motions, more of us habitually dawdle away considerable time in carrying on the routine of our work.

It was a woman who runs her home with exceptional efficiency who gave me a formula for cutting down the time devoted to routine tasks. "All you have to do," she said, "is make your motions faster. This may sound like driving yourself But I discovered years ago that it is not. Actually, we work more easily and use less energy when we do things at a brisk tempo."

She went on to explain that several years before, when her children were young, she had been bothered by the fact that when they asked her to do anything with them she was always having to tell them, "Mother doesn't have time just now. Run along and play."

"One day it came to me that I never did have time for my children. I was always too busy doing my housework. That morning, right after the children left for school, I sat down and held a conference with myself. 'Am I too fussy in my housekeeping?' I asked myself. 'Am I spending time doing unnecessary things?"

Has my house become more important to me than my family? Somehow I just couldn't convince myself that I was wrong to keep my home neat and clean, or that I should start serving meals out of cans. And I couldn't argue myself into thinking it was a mistake to set high standards of housekeeping for my two daughters

"But something is radically wrong with my housekeeping," I told myself. "What is it?" Then it came to me. "I am too slow in my motions. When I wash dishes I am unnecessarily deliberate in handling each dish. When I sweep or dust I do it not only thoroughly, which is desirable, but with almost languid movements of my hands and arms. When I make the beds I dawdle over spreading and tucking in the bed clothes, I do everything too deliberately. If I were to do things just as thoroughly, but with much faster movements . . ." I told myself.

"I got up from my conference with myself and began my day's work. Starting with gathering up the breakfast dishes, rinsing them and putting them in the dishwasher, I said to myself, 'Now, Marjorie, step up your work-tempo. You don't need to drive yourself, but you know very well you can speed up your motions.'

"I did just that, and found myself saying, *'This is fun! Why have I been dawdling all these years?'* That morning I finished my housework in much less time than I had been taking. Yet I hadn't shirked or slacked any part of it.

"Before long I discovered that, though I was spending less time at it, my housekeeping had actually improved. When my eyes and mind worked ahead of my feet and hands, I dusted and swept more thoroughly, though actually using fewer minutes and less energy. And I found myself getting in little extra touches because my eyes saw odds and ends of things that I could do 'on the wing,' as it were.

"I found that I did have more time for my children. And my husband began to notice that the dinner dishes were done faster and that I was readier to go places and do things with him in the evening. This, I discovered, was not only because I had more

free time, but because I felt less weary. For a while I didn't tell him my secret. When I did he remarked, 'Well that explains something that has had me puzzled. You are dressed and downstairs in the morning much quicker than you used to be. I had begun to think I was slowing down in my dressing—but it's you who have speeded up.'

"I haven't exactly speeded up," I said, "but I have stepped up the tempo of my motions." Then I told him the whole story. "When you step up the tempo of your motions, your eyes and your mind begin to run ahead of your hands and feet. So every motion you make, and every step you take, is more efficient. For example, it used to take me two or three strokes to light a match. Now I strike it *once*—and it *lights*. Or suppose I want to take down a vase from a shelf in the pantry. Instead of standing and looking up and trying to decide whether I can reach it, and stretching up to see, only to find that it is just too far back on the shelf, I pick up the step stool to start with, place it in exactly the right position, and reach the vase quickly and easily. Funny how much time it saves to do things exactly right the first time! It makes you deft in all your motions. I guess the reason is because you know you are going to move faster, you think more sharply."

"Well," said my husband, "You've sold me. I've seen the results, and I'm going to try your stepped-up tempo in my own work."



He did. I made it my business to talk to him several months later, to find out whether he actually had been able to quicken the tempo of his office work.

"Indeed I have," he told me—"and much more than I had anticipated. I found myself walking more briskly down the corridor when I arrived the first morning. I tackled the work on my desk with a new alertness of muscles and mind. I worked faster because I had to think faster to keep ahead of my motions."

Furthermore, I moved from one task to the next without skipping a beat, so to speak. A faster motion tempo produced a faster thinking tempo."

Actually, neither this man nor his wife had been dawdlers. But, like many of us, their working tempo was slower than it needed to be.

We think of our working tempo as being controlled by our mental tempo. But perhaps just the reverse is true. If we speed up our motions our minds *have* to speed up to keep ahead of them. It is much like developing the habit of rapid reading. If we permit our minds to dwell on each word we are bound to be slow readers. Whereas, if we read by phrases, clauses, sentences, and paragraphs, our rate of mental absorption automatically increases. Not only that, but our mental processes are so sharpened that frequently we get more out of what we read.

In the same way, moving a bit faster can stimulate us mentally so that we get our work done more swiftly and easily.

It is not necessary to accelerate our motions to a point of developing a sense of rush or pressure. Many of us are lazy-motioned without realizing it. We fail to focus sharply on what we are doing, and to train ourselves to weigh the value or importance of our motions in terms of what they are intended to accomplish.

A quickening of our working tempo is likely to result in a new and stimulating sense of control over our minds and muscles, and a heightened sensation of vitality. We will have developed a habit that will pay handsome dividends in the time and energy saved in the routine of our daily living. We may think of this as *saving* time, actually it is a tremendously effective way to *make* time and *store* it for future use.

FIVE

Watch Your Mood —and Use It

The mystery of mood has a great deal to do with the profitable use of our time all through life. Mood is apt to be a matter of energy: physical or mental, or energy-of-the-spirit—often of all three

Since energy is a dimension of time, mood is most important to the effective use of our time. We should watch our mood constantly and take the fullest possible advantage of it when it is creative, constructive, confident, cooperative. When we are “in the mood” we can often do twice as much work in a given span of time. On such occasions, if at all possible, we will be wise to abandon our conventional routine and take advantage of the golden opportunity to accomplish a great deal in a relatively short time.

Men and women in every profession and business, as well as scientists and creative people, would accomplish far more with their time if they refused to be bossed by the clock or the calendar when in a mood for accomplishment. At such times they get their second wind and make phenomenal progress on projects that at a less favorable time would require much greater effort.

The greatest creative writers, composers, and artists ignore meals and normal hours of sleep when they find themselves in a

creative mood. They literally submerge themselves in their work as long as this creative mood lasts.

On one occasion a well-known author worked almost continuously for three weeks. He ate only twice a day, and then at odd hours at his desk, and slept for only short intervals when he was completely overcome by fatigue. During this time his mail went unopened, and he scarcely saw his family. In these three weeks he wrote a short novel which would have taken him several months if he had followed his normal working routine. Afterward he rewarded himself with a solid week of loafing, sleeping, playing golf, and going on excursions with his family, to give his mind a complete rest. He had abundantly earned this reward!

Few of us have either the need or the native capacity to work with such intense concentration over so long a period. But most of us could do better than we do at taking advantage of our propitious moods. There are times to watch the clock and live on schedule. There are other times to ignore the clock and junk conventional working and living habits in order to finish what we are doing—while we are in the mood.



The head of an advertising agency in a New England city was confined to his home for three days with an infection. The morning of the fourth day he awoke with a concept for an entirely new advertising theme for one of his agency's most important clients. After breakfasting in bed he felt well enough to get up and go to the office. But he decided, first, to make notes on the promising new theme his mind had conjured up. So, sitting in a comfortable chair in his dressing gown, he started to write.

At noon when his lunch tray was brought to him he was still writing. He ended by staying home the rest of the week, writing, writing, writing. The mood was on him.

The following Monday morning he arrived at his office with the complete campaign for an entire year, worked out in detail. Normally such a program would have taken the combined efforts

of a half dozen members of his organization, as well as his own. It would have involved numerous conferences, both within the agency and with the client, covering a period of weeks. But, because this man had been wise enough to capitalize on a creative mood, the whole process had been short-circuited

"That was an exceedingly profitable illness," he smilingly told me.



For two years a consulting engineer fought to make himself sleep between four and seven in the morning.

"For some silly reason I found myself waking up about four o'clock popping with ideas. I would resolutely turn over and try to *make* myself go back to sleep. Usually without success I would get up at seven with a feeling of having been awake most of the night

"One evening I read a book on the use of the subconscious mind in which the author made the point that a person would sometimes awaken at odd hours because his subconscious mind was ready to report on some project it had been working on while he slept.

"That's what is happening to me,' I told myself. Since then I haven't tried to go back to sleep. Instead, I keep a pad and pencil on my bedside table and make notes of the ideas that come popping into my mind in the early morning hours. Usually after making the first note I wait a few minutes to see if there may not be another idea coming along, for I have discovered that ideas frequently come in pairs, and sometimes in litters! Often after making a sheaf of notes I swiftly drift back to sleep and do not wake up until the alarm goes off. In this way I have cured myself of my four-to-seven insomnia. Best of all, sometimes when I arrive at my office with my early-morning notes, the creative part of my day's work is done!"

In my own experience, one of my most important ideas came

to me in a cryptic phrase at three-thirty in the morning in a Chicago hotel I switched on the bedside light and jotted it down. As I started to turn off the light I had a sense that the idea might develop if I gave my conscious mind a chance. So I got up and put on my dressing gown and slippers and sat down with a pad and pencil. Sure enough, the idea began to expand into the details of a major project for one of my clients. For half an hour I wrote, perhaps more rapidly than I have ever written. Then my thoughts stopped abruptly. I went back to bed and promptly fell asleep.

On awakening the next morning I told myself that the idea I had found so stimulating in the night would probably turn out to be so much drivel by daylight. But it did not. Instead it proved to be a most successful venture.

A helpful general rule is to do things when we feel like it, regardless of the hour, if at all possible. I have a friend who delights me in this respect. He is the manager of a department store in a New England city. I have known him to get up in the middle of the night, dress, drive down to the store and work out plans for a special sale event, returning home just in time for breakfast. He will have done perhaps two full days of conventional work in a few hours. In the morning he is far more refreshed in mind and spirit than he would have been from the same hours spent in restless sleep.



Mood is usually associated with an individual's characteristic way of working. An article devoted to Hans Hofmann, one of America's outstanding painters of abstract art, stresses the point that each artist has his own way of working, some slow, some fast, some vehemently, some thoughtfully. The article goes on to say that Hofmann spends three times as long in preparing for a painting as he does in the work itself, and it quotes the artist: "I clean very nicely my palette. I wash hundreds of brushes. I keep the mind off myself. Then I work eight, ten, twelve hours

without interruption, without drinking or eating I am usually done in one session. It doesn't matter how long you take What counts is the picture."¹

Which is another way of saying that what counts is progress.



There is a special aspect of mood which deserves brief comment Psychologists tell us that we have "mood cycles." Some authorities claim that these cycles have a rhythm characteristic to each individual.

In laymen language, this signifies that we have our *up* periods and our *down* periods, varying in length and intensity In our *up* periods we are confident, creative, optimistic, productive In our *down* periods we are low in these characteristics. It is hard for us to work We accomplish little.

Some people seem to have a weekly mood-rhythm One of my business associates describes his weekly rhythm thus: "I start rather slowly on Monday morning and pick up during the day. By Tuesday morning I usually have a good head of steam, which carries me through Wednesday and Thursday By Friday I begin to slow down Saturday I am not much good But my worst day is Sunday! By Sunday afternoon the tide is out and the mud flats of my spirit are exposed. If I were called upon to make an important decision between noon and six o'clock Sunday evening, I would be aghast My mind is completely out of focus and the world seems utterly unreal Curiously enough, when the lights come on Sunday night the tide of my spirit starts to rise, my confidence begins to return, and I am on the up"

Some day we may know much more about mood-cycles and their cause and periodicity. Meanwhile, we should be conscious of their reality and apply ourselves with double zeal during our *up* periods to accomplish whatever we are engaged in doing, and spend the *down* periods doing the routine things about our jobs which do not require imagination or inspiration. Thus we will con-

¹ *Newsweek*, April 29, 1957

tinue to make progress, and at the same time avoid the sense of discouragement that otherwise might make the *down* periods completely unproductive.



It is just as important to take advantage of our mood to do pleasurable things as to make progress with our work. All of us would be far happier if we humored ourselves when in the mood to do something crazily unconventional

The most delicious piece of lemon pie I ever ate was baked at midnight by my older sister. She and her husband had taken my brother and me, then boys in knee pants, to the circus in the old Madison Square Garden. On the way home we passed an all-night restaurant with a window full of lemon pies "I'm in a mood for a piece of lemon pie," said my brother. "So am I," I chimed in, my mouth watering

"All right," said my refreshingly unconventional sister, "when we get home I'll bake you a lemon pie" And bake one she did. We cut into it after midnight, and the four of us ate every bite of it before we went to bed. The gods never had a celestial lemon pie that tasted any better. But, then, it is doubtful if the gods were ever in the mood for lemon pie at midnight!

That was more than fifty years ago, yet the memory of that nocturnal lemon pie has lived with me all these years. Frequently when I am tempted to reject an impulse to indulge some quixotic mood, I remind myself of that memorable lemon pie at midnight.



Akin to mood is the occasional burst of energy we sometimes experience at unconventional times. The laziest man I know says that every so often he "gets all steamed up to do things," usually late in the evening

"Sometimes after I get into my pajamas," he says, "I feel like doing some chore around the house that I've been putting off. No matter what it is, or what hour of the day or night, I do it."

Sometimes one chore leads to another, and I end up by doing five or six things, from tightening up a leaking faucet to going down to my workshop in the basement and making a kitchen stool that my wife has been at me for months to make for her. Maybe it is silly to do this in the middle of the night, but that's the way I'm built. And after I've indulged myself in one of these nocturnal work binges, I go to bed and sleep like a tired child."

If more of us would humor our bursts of energy, at whatever time they strike us, we would accomplish much with a very small expenditure of either time or energy.



It all adds up to this. What counts in using our time and energy wisely is not how many hours we work, or how "hard" we work, but *what we accomplish*. Accomplishment and progress are the factors which make for a successful career. If we cultivate the habit of watching our moods and taking the fullest possible advantage of them, we will be helping ourselves to all the time we need.

SIX

Don't Force— "Easy Does It"

In his novel based on the life of Alexandre Dumas, Guy Endore quotes the famous author and playwright as saying.

Don't force Let happen. Mankind is like an ocean; swim and you will soon be exhausted and you will certainly never reach shore You can flounder around, you can be swamped, you can be drowned. But if instead you let yourself go to the currents of life, the waves will bear you up, they will carry you along, and maybe even toss you high up in the air Remember this Your life is yours Don't accept any of the rules that other people have used and are themselves ready to throw away. But let life make her own rules especially for you. Then, when you are old, you will be able to say, I lived And not, I might have lived.¹

Of course, none of us can entirely give up swimming and just drift with the current But most of us can use the current more than we do; and all of us should live our own lives We tend to work entirely too hard, in the sense that we press too hard, and pressing burns much more energy than working.

A man who seems always to have his life well under control has a motto which sums up a philosophy and a working technique that is worth sharing. He expressed it in three words: *Easy does it.*

¹ Endore, Guy, *King of Paris* Reprinted with permission of the publishers, Simon & Schuster, New York.

One afternoon I spent several hours with this man discussing his wise use of his time and energy. He told me that he stumbled on his working philosophy in the Bible. "I used to be a tense worker," he explained, "especially when faced with a task that was a bit difficult or out of the ordinary. I am the trouble shooter for my firm and my work involves a great deal of traveling. Naturally, I am under pressure almost every day, with a good many important decisions to make on my own responsibility.

"Years ago I started playing a nightly game with the Bible the Gideon Society places in hotel bedrooms. Before I turn out the bedside light, I open the Bible at random and put my finger on a verse. One night in a hotel in Grand Rapids I opened to the thirtieth chapter of Isaiah and my finger rested on the fifteenth verse—'In quietness and in confidence shall be your strength.'

"I went to bed repeating that sentence over and over. I told myself soberly that there was no quietness in my life. Anything but! Furthermore, because I was often tense in the face of difficult situations, I was frequently short on self-confidence.

"What makes for confidence?" I asked myself that night, unable to get to sleep, I decided that deep-down confidence comes from one of two things: having done the same thing before, or being thoroughly prepared. In my present situation confidence could not come from having done the thing before, for I was here to straighten out a very complicated situation. 'But I am well prepared,' I told myself. I had spent days getting the facts and figures organized, and I was sure I knew the answers to almost any question that might be brought up.

"Then there is no earthly reason why I should not feel confident," I told myself. I settled my head on my pillow and went off to sleep.

"Next morning I awoke with a sense of quiet confidence that was new to me. 'In quietness and in confidence shall be your strength,' I told myself. After a leisurely breakfast I left the hotel in plenty of time to walk to my appointment.

"I had expected my mission to take all day, but by noon a diffi-

cult situation had been ironed out in a way that was perfectly satisfactory to the customer, and I knew would be to my company. As I walked back to the hotel I said to myself, 'Easy does it—if you have quiet confidence.' From that day on 'Easy does it' has been my working motto. But it is not a good motto to depend on unless you really do prepare yourself carefully. When you are thoroughly prepared, the quietness and confidence which Isaiah promises will be your strength."



One evening I encountered a sagacious old gentleman in the club car of a train en route to Atlanta who had another slant on "Easy does it." During the course of our conversation he observed, "I have always made it a rule to attack easy tasks as though they were difficult, and difficult tasks as though they were easy!"

This whimsical philosophy recognizes the fact that we sometimes neglect making sound preparations for tackling easy jobs because they *look* so easy, whereas often we discover we had not thought into them far enough to encounter the difficulties, so we are caught unprepared.

On the other hand, we are inclined to worry too much about the jobs that *look* difficult, and in so doing lose the quiet confidence that should be our strength. In either case, all we need do is take pains to prepare ourselves thoroughly, so that we cannot be taken by surprise.

The trick is to study a job or problem from every angle before starting to work it out. When we visualize clearly what needs to be done to prepare ourselves, often the preparation is surprisingly easy and we can undertake the task with quiet confidence.



Still another aspect of "Easy does it" is to be ourselves. Straining to be somebody we are not makes us tighten up and spoils our effectiveness. Arthur Godfrey's success as a radio and tele-

vision star is due, according to his own testimony as reported in a magazine interview,² to the fact that on the air he acts exactly as he would off the air. He is utterly himself, hence completely at ease.

Most of the "easy" entertainers win a place in the public's heart—stars like Perry Como, Bing Crosby, Dave Garroway. We enjoy watching these easy-does-it performers because we feel that they are competent to entertain us and we can relax. While we may enjoy watching high-pressure artists, they seem either to burn themselves out, or we tire of them, with their forced clowning.

Paradoxically, when any of us strain for effect, we are in grave danger of losing our effectiveness.

We are all "stars" on our own small stages. Shakespeare never wrote more truly than when he penned. "All the world's a stage, and all the men and women merely players."

If we would remember this, and as a matter of habit keep in mind that we *are* playing parts, and that our problems and troubles are not nearly as serious to our audience as they are to us, we will find it easier to keep our perspective.

² *Look*, February 1, 1949.

SEVEN

Whenever You Have to Wait

If a good fairy were to follow us through our days and hand us a little nugget of gold every time we had to wait a few minutes, would we not cherish these precious nuggets? Certainly we would not let them slip through our fingers or throw them away.

Yet most of us throw away golden nuggets of our time nearly every day—while we are waiting. While this subject has been touched on earlier, its importance warrants a separate chapter.

From an insurance company publication I quote this excellent essay on "Waiting":

How many hours of our life are spent in waiting: waiting for dinner; waiting for someone to arrive, waiting for transportation, or even waiting for some important event to happen. Plan as we will, waits seem to be unavoidable.

It has been said that our leisure either makes or breaks us, and certainly what we do with the time while we are waiting can do much to make us, and perhaps to break us.

If we have our lives organized, we can use the time while we are waiting to do the countless little chores that would otherwise go undone.

Vivid is a picture of the great explorer, Nansen, shortly before his death, when he was waiting for a train in the North Station. Seated on a bench, his suitcase serving as a desk, he was employ-

ing the idle waiting time to write letters. He, who had reached fame, knew well how to make the most of his time ¹



If a person were to keep account of all the time spent in waiting during his whole lifetime, he would probably find that it added up to at least a year. If there were some way to measure the amount of nervous energy he consumed during these periods of waiting, because of impatience or irritation—even anger on occasion—he would probably discover that he had expended much more than a year's worth of energy.

Because it usually consumes both time and nervous energy, every period of waiting, whether for a few minutes or several hours, is worth our thoughtful attention.

A manufacturer who has made a hobby of using his waiting time writes. "You may be amused at some of the ways I utilize my waiting minutes, but you can't laugh off the fact that even the briefest bits of waiting time can be used to wonderful advantage.

"Suppose I have fifteen or twenty minutes to wait in a public place. I begin almost automatically to study the women around me. I ask myself, as I look at each one, 'Would she be a customer for our company's product? How would she use it? If I were to start to tell her about it, what would I say?' . . . Several of our best advertising ideas have come to me as a result of these brief consumer studies.

"If I have to wait at my club for someone who is joining me for luncheon, I ask myself, 'What is the most important thing for me to accomplish this afternoon?' Away from the office, with half the day yet to be used, I get a perspective on my work that often results in my returning with a much clearer idea of how to use the afternoon productively.

"Waiting in a hotel lobby, a barber shop, or a doctor's reception room, I try to listen to people's conversation. I am not interested

¹ *Contact*, issued by the Capitol Life Insurance Company, Denver, Colorado. Quoted with permission.

in what they are saying on a personal basis, but these conversations often provide revealing glimpses into people's mental processes and motivations."



A lawyer once told me, "Like most married men I often have to wait for my wife to finish dressing when we are going out. I used to fret and pace the floor. Then I read of a college president who told a graduating class of men, 'I hope you will all marry. When your wife says she is ready to go out with you except for putting on her hat and gloves, sit down with a book and read. You will be surprised how much knowledge you will acquire.'

"I followed this advice, and I certainly have been both surprised and gratified at the number of pages of reading I have been able to squeeze into these waiting periods, not because my wife keeps me waiting unduly long, but because—as I suspect my benefactor the college president knew—it takes less time to read a page in a book than we assume it will."



The president of a prominent corporation keeps in his wallet a 3x5 index card on which are noted the four or five business problems that are troubling him. He calls it his "Concerns Card." On it he lists problems such as what to do about one of the company's executives who is slipping, how to reduce production costs on a certain item to meet a new competitive threat, where to get the money to meet a note due at the bank at the end of the month without jeopardizing the company's working capital, where to find a really top-flight man for one of the firm's important sales territories, how to iron out a serious conflict that has developed between the production and sales departments.

"When I face a wait of a few minutes," this president says, "I take out my Concerns Card and focus my mind briefly on each of the problems. Being away from the office gives me a wider

perspective, and the very fact that I have only a few minutes causes my mind to work fast. Every once in a while, as I go down the list, a solution to one of the problems flashes into my mind. I have solved many knotty problems in these little odds and ends of waiting time."



A well-known woman novelist whose output is the envy of her writing friends uses a very simple but practical technique for salvaging her waiting periods. She carries three or four sheets of paper and a pencil in her handbag. At the head of the top sheet is typed the last sentence or two of the book she is working on currently. Whenever she has to wait she takes out her paper and pencil and continues her story from where she had left off. Sometimes she writes a page or more, at other times only two or three sentences. But it keeps her book "in momentum."

This author declares that some of the best passages in her novels have been written in odd minutes while waiting in the most unusual places. On one occasion, when she had to wait for a friend for nearly an hour in a hotel lobby, she introduced into her story a human interest episode involving a young couple sitting near her whose conversation she could overhear.



A man of nervous temperament, who used to chafe unduly every time he stood at the curb waiting for a traffic light to turn green, decided he must cure himself of the "burning sense of impatience" he experienced during such waits.

"Why not use these waits to the advantage of my nervous system?" he asked himself. A gym instructor had once told him, "For a quick lift, stand tall and take three deep breaths."

He tried it the next time he was held up by a traffic light. "It works like magic," he testifies. "Now, whenever I am held up, unless it happens to be at an intersection where the traffic is so heavy that the air is filled with monoxide fumes, I stand tall and

take from one to three deep breaths. When I step from the curb, I enjoy a calm sense of self-control that is an amazingly big return on a very small investment of time."

This idea works well in driving a car. While waiting for a traffic light to change, to sit tall and take two or three deep breaths relaxes one.



Even a very long wait can be enjoyably employed. One afternoon I left New York by plane for Chicago. I was to be met by a friend at the Chicago airport at 8 50 that night, and driven to a resort in Southern Wisconsin. The take-off was delayed for hours because of engine trouble. It was 2 15 in the morning when my plane finally landed at Chicago, five hours and twenty-five minutes behind schedule.

I had tried to get a message through to my waiting friend to tell him that the plane would be so late that I would go to a hotel for the night, and meet him in the morning. However, when I walked into the airport waiting-room there he was, calm and smiling, apparently not in the least bothered by his long wait.

To my protestations over his martyrdom, he assured me that he had thoroughly enjoyed himself. He explained that during World War II he had been in Government service and many of his assignments had taken him overseas. Often he had been obliged to wait in airports for hours, and sometimes all day. He had learned a specific for patient waiting. Whenever it became evident that he was going to have a long wait, he went to the newsstand and brought a paper-bound book—sometimes a classic, sometimes a murder mystery, depending on his mood—and buried himself in it.

On this particular night when, a little after eight o'clock, the loudspeaker had announced a delay in the arrival of my plane, he had followed his old practice and settled himself, not to wait, but to read. While others impatiently hovered around the information center, asking questions, chafing, and burning nervous

energy at a furious rate, he became so engrossed in his book that he was not conscious of the arrival of my plane until the passengers began to stream into the waiting-room and he looked up and saw me.

Instead of consuming nervous energy, he had been re-creating himself.



A research scientist has worked out a most intelligent plan. Whenever or wherever he has to wait, immediately he engages his mind in trying to figure out a completely novel approach to some project he is working on.

"Being delayed for a few minutes—or even for hours—seems terribly unimportant in contrast to the project I am thinking about," he writes me. "Some of my most daring ideas have come to me during these brief waiting periods. On one occasion I was waiting for a morning train in a suburban railroad station. As I shifted mental gears from being a man waiting for the 8 17 to being a man searching for the solution to a baffling mathematical problem that was blocking my progress, a possible formula flashed into my mind. I got out my pad and pencil and sat down and started to work it out. The 8 17 came and went. And the 8:33. And the 8.54. I boarded the 9 24—with my problem solved!"



Sitting in my car yesterday, waiting for my wife to do some shopping in a small city in New England, I watched with interest a man who stood leaning against the fender of the car next to mine. For a few minutes he would watch the people passing on the sidewalk. Then he would take a memo pad from his pocket and make a note.

My curiosity got the better of me. "Neighbor," I said, "you seem to be improving your shining moments. It's none of my

business, of course, but I'm curious. Are you making some kind of a survey?"

He sauntered over to the car window. "No," he said "I am waiting for my wife to come out of the movies I'm the editor of the local newspaper and I've been watching the people go by. I always get ideas when I watch people I've made notes for a news item and two editorials while I've been standing here"

I told him about the book I was writing, and assured him he would find himself in it in a chapter to be titled, "Whenever You Have to Wait."

"That's downright interesting," he said "Do you know, I get most of my best ideas while I'm waiting"



Waiting time need never be wasted by any of us, no matter where we are or what our situation. It will not be if we resolutely refuse to fret, and make a firm habit of spending the time *doing something*—reading, writing, thinking, listening, observing, planning, breathing deeply, or perhaps snatching at the opportunity just to close our eyes and relax.

EIGHT

Six Rules for Managing Your Correspondence

Falling behind in correspondence, both social and business, is one of the most common "put-off" habits. Our greatest expenditure of time and mental energy is not in writing letters, but in *not* writing them. Many of us let our correspondence accumulate until it becomes a heavy burden on our minds, and sometimes on our spirits as well.

It takes at least twice the time and mental energy to *catch up* with correspondence than it does to *keep up*. The first part of the secret of keeping up is to answer the letters we receive *right away*. Or, when we get the impulse to write a letter on our own initiative, to write or dictate it immediately, while the impulse is fresh. A letter written promptly can usually be short, and written in about half the time it takes when the impulse to write has been allowed to cool. Usually, too, it will be a better letter.

An otherwise very able business executive used to wear himself out mentally over his backed-up correspondence. It accumulated in a tray on his desk. He groaned every time he looked at that tray. Worse yet, his unanswered correspondence haunted his leisure hours. Even after going to bed he would mentally dictate letters, apologizing for his delay in answering this or that

letter, and explaining why it had gone unanswered so long. Or he would wake up early in the morning struggling to formulate the reply to some neglected letter.

Arriving at his office, he would find a new sheaf of letters in the morning mail to add to the pile in the tray. So formidable was this pile of unanswered correspondence that, instead of tackling it, he would plunge into his day's activities, promising himself that later in the day he would call in his secretary for an orgy of dictation.

But day after day passed and the pile of unanswered letters would keep growing. Occasionally he would take care of two or three letters that simply had to be answered. But the rest of the pile would stay there until, usually when he was about to leave on a trip, he would put in an exhausting day of dictation. Meanwhile, every letter in the tray had probably been written—in his mind—half a dozen times. The waste of his mental energy was enormous.

A friend stopped in at this man's office one morning and, during the course of their conversation, chided him for not having replied to a letter he had written him two weeks before.

The guilty one pointed to the tray of unanswered correspondence and explained his unhappy situation. "I just can't keep up with my correspondence," he apologized.

"The trouble is," said his visitor, "you probably put off answering your mail until it is necessary to write lengthy letters because you feel you must explain your delay. Most correspondence can be answered in a few words, or two or three sentences—if you write at once."

Several minutes of further discussion revealed that the basic trouble with the delinquent correspondent was that, like a great many other people, he thought keeping up with his correspondence involved "writing letters." Mentally he pictured a letter as a rather formal document of several paragraphs, with a conventional opening, a comprehensive discussion of the subject at hand, and a conventional closing.

"Your trouble is," said his visitor, "that you make a 'Production' of writing a letter. I don't wonder your correspondence backs up. Today there isn't time for such old-fashioned letters. Furthermore, people haven't time today to wade through lengthy epistles, excepting of course family letters and correspondence between old friends who have news to exchange."

He pointed to his friend's morning mail on the desk "Take those letters you received this morning—I'll wager not one of them needs more than a paragraph as a reply. Just for fun, shall we take a look at three or four of them?"

Three letters were selected at random. The first was an invitation to address a luncheon meeting of a professional group on a certain date.

"Are you going to accept this invitation?"

The procrastinator started a long explanation of why he could not accept it "In the first place I don't feel that I know enough about the subject to talk to that group. And I certainly can't spare the time to study up on it. Anyway, I've just about stopped giving talks because it takes too much out of me. Besides, I'm going to be in New York all that week."

"In that case," laughed the visitor, "all you need to say is: 'I am complimented by your invitation to address your luncheon group on the fifteenth, but it happens I will be in New York all that week. So you'll have to excuse me.'"

The caller went on to add, "It is my observation that most people make the mistake of giving three or four reasons for not being able to do something, or to accept an invitation, whereas one compelling reason is enough. The other reasons are worse than needless. They are apt to throw doubt on the true reason. Anyway, why waste our own time and the recipient's in a discussion of them?"

The second of the three letters was a long, rambling one from a casual acquaintance, outlining a controversial economic theory and asking for the recipient's views on it.

"Do you expect to see this man any time soon?"

"Yes, probably at a committee meeting next week."

"Well, then, all you need to say is something like this. 'You raise some interesting questions in your letter. In all probability we'll be seeing each other in the near future, when we can discuss the subject. Meanwhile, I'll be thinking over your letter and getting my ideas sorted out.' That is all such a request deserves. What's in the next letter?"

"It's from a friend who is writing a book and asks me if I will honor him by writing its foreword. I've never done anything like that before and it will take some thinking out. I don't know just what to say to him."

"Will you write the foreword?"

"Why yes, of course I will. He's an old friend. But I don't know what angle he wants me to take. And of course I haven't read the manuscript. I'd want to do that, and also to discuss the matter with him, before attempting to write a foreword."

"In that case, it seems to me all you need to say is, 'I'll be very happy indeed to write a foreword for your book. I assume you will let me have a copy of the manuscript when it is finished, and give me some idea of how you want the foreword to be slanted.' Such a brief note will take care of the matter until the manuscript is finished. Meanwhile, his mind will be at rest, and so will yours."

"You make it very simple and easy."

"It is simple and easy if you answer your mail *right away*—and confine yourself to the pertinent facts."

This closing statement is an important part of the secret of keeping up with correspondence. to deal with pertinent facts only, avoiding rambling explanations which waste the time of both writer and recipient. This does not, of course, rule out including items of news that would be interesting to the person to whom we are writing, but writing newsy items is usually easy and pleasurable rather than burdensome.

It seems incredible that any businessman could be so inept at managing his correspondence, yet the man just described is no

isolated case. A great many men and women make a terrible burden of their correspondence. Because they have an 1890 concept of letter writing, they procrastinate until a molehill letter, which could have been taken care of with a three-line note, eventually becomes a mountainous problem.



A woman who is very active in club and community affairs, and receives from ten to twenty letters daily in addition to her correspondence with her scattered family, sits down at her desk as soon as her morning mail arrives. When she gets up, perhaps half an hour later, her correspondence is "up," as she expresses it. She has accepted or declined invitations, answered questions, and acknowledged letters from family and friends. Her notes are usually brief—just a few sentences—but apparently quite satisfactory. She has the reputation for being a "good correspondent," yet she spends less time writing letters than almost any busy person I know.



There are, of course, letters that are difficult to write, letters that must be thought through carefully. Usually such letters can be written with less expenditure of time and mental effort if we start with a rough draft. When we strike a snag, either because we need additional information, or because we must do some further thinking, we can skip this particular point temporarily and rough out the rest of the letter. It can then be laid aside to "cool" while we get the needed information, or give the matter further thought.

Having roughed out our letter, we can then turn to other matters. Our faithful servant, the subconscious mind, will take over the half-written letter. Likely as not, when we are not even thinking about it, the right thing to say and the right way to express it will come to us. Even if no such inspiration is forthcoming, when the time comes to make another try at our letter,

thanks to a period of mental digestion it will usually prove comparatively easy to finish

This rough-draft technique almost always takes less mental energy than putting off writing a difficult letter until we feel that we know just what to say. As a rule, we do not really start to *think* until we start to *write*, for not until the mind is forced to focus sharply does effective cerebration start.



For years I have handled at least half of my own correspondence with a little double-folded memorandum form which accommodates about fifty words. I use these memos not only to answer many letters, but for messages of congratulation, notes asking for information, suggestions to clients, brief items of news which I think will interest my friends, and so on.

They are great time-savers for they force me to think clearly and express myself crisply. Over the past twenty years they have saved literally hundreds of hours of correspondence time, and spared my friends and clients from wading through needlessly long letters.

Even more important, they have helped me to *keep up* with my correspondence. If I had to write a letter of conventional length, often I would be tempted to put it aside until I had more time, whereas the thought of dictating a short memo invites immediate action.

It is not the length of a letter that counts, but its depth—the thoughtfulness, human warmth, and good will it expresses, which often require only a few sentences. A man whose wife had died showed me with deep feeling a letter of sympathy he had received from Bruce Barton. It was a single paragraph of only five lines, but he told me it had given him more comfort and strength than any of the scores of letters he had received, many of them several pages long, written by people who were very close to him. What it said had such depth that it had given his spirit a lift.

As a result of watching hundreds of people struggle with the

problem of keeping up with their correspondence, and experimenting with many techniques, I have evolved six simple rules for managing correspondence, and at the same time devoting a minimum amount of time to it:

1 Answer every letter *promptly*, even if you have time for only a sentence or two

2 Whenever you get the urge—or realize the need or obligation—to write a letter, write it *immediately*. Get it off your mind

3 Before you start a letter, project your mind into the recipient's and ask yourself "What would I want to know if I were on the receiving end of this letter?" Give all this information—facts, figures, dates, times, etc., so there will be no need to write again. Too often it takes two or three letters back and forth to straighten out matters which might have been covered in a single clear and complete first letter.

4. Plunge into the subject of your letter—*fast*. Most of us devote entirely too many words to "warming up" to our subject, or repeating part of the letter we have received, when our correspondent already knows what he or she wrote us.

5 When giving personal or family news, or describing experiences, travels, special situations, etc., let your story flow. Write as much as comes easily to your pen. This is the "You" part of your letter, and it should not be sacrificed to brevity.

6. When you are through—*sign off*. Don't waste time or words explaining why you are ending your letter, or stumbling to a conventional stop

Since keeping up with correspondence is a life-long problem with nearly all of us, it behooves each of us to adopt some such set of rules, and make it a fixed habit to follow them. Not only will we save time, but we will "keep our friendships in repair."

NINE

Drive Farther Ahead

Too many of us go through life living and working bumper-to-bumper, instead of keeping our eyes on the road far enough ahead to keep out of trouble.

"If every motorist would take up flying," an airline pilot once told me, "he would be a much safer automobile driver because he would learn to drive farther ahead. You see, in an airplane you are obliged to watch and plan way ahead because you can't suddenly put on the brakes and come to a stop. If you drive a car with as much concern over what is happening down the block, or within the next quarter mile, as if you could not suddenly put on the brakes, you will seldom get in a tight fix and have to jam on the brakes."

Since there are many situations, in our work and our lives, where we cannot stop suddenly, if we develop the habit of "driving farther ahead" in all of our affairs we will keep much better control over both our time and the four forms of our energy.

Since I began my study of time-use I have been shocked at how many otherwise able and intelligent people throw away hours and days, and even weeks, of their time because they do not plan far enough ahead.

In traveling, they start on a trip without adequate information

or reservations, and run into all sorts of time-and-energy-consuming complications

They tackle important jobs only to be held up, sometimes for days, for the lack of a bit of necessary information, or for a tool or some essential material, which could have been on hand had they planned ahead.

They go into conferences without the necessary facts and figures, and waste hours of their own and everybody else's time trying unsuccessfully to arrive at a plan or a decision—and then, likely as not, have to call another conference after the information has been assembled.

They ignore the help their subconscious minds would give them if they would mentally organize their problems in advance of having to come to grips with them, so that they could be simmering in the fireless-cooking compartments of their minds

No wonder people go through life driving bumper-to-bumper
No wonder they are always terribly rushed, with so little opportunity to relax and enjoy themselves!



Another very big area of trouble is that we blunder into time-and-energy-consuming projects that are of little importance to our happiness or progress, because we do not look far enough ahead and ask ourselves whether we may not be letting ourselves in for something that will not be worth the time it will take. This is particularly true with respect to meetings of organizations where it is easy to talk too much and wind up as chairman of a committee! As Mrs. Frederick Lewis Allen has expressed it so patly, "Almost anything is easier to get into than to get out of."

It would be wise to bear in mind the advice Sherman Adams said President Eisenhower once gave him "Never neglect an opportunity to keep your mouth closed."

Of course this is not to be interpreted as advocating the shirking of our responsibility to serve useful causes. It is merely a precaution to Stop, Look, and Listen before barging into situ-

ations which are pretty certain to absorb our time and energy out of all proportion to their importance to us or to our ability to make a worth-while contribution.

Still another mistake almost all of us make is that we schedule ourselves too closely when it is not necessary. If we would look ahead and ask ourselves whether we are putting our appointments too close together, or promising to have work finished needlessly soon, we would get ourselves into fewer tight places, time-wise. By always allowing a bit of time between engagements, or in the carrying out of assignments, we will conserve our nervous energy.



Whatever we are about to undertake, taking all the time we need to prepare ourselves is a very practical way of driving farther ahead. If we face a manual job we can ask ourselves: What will I need for this job.

- In the way of tools or equipment?
- In the way of materials or supplies?
- In the way of help?
- In the way of time?

If we are to attend a business conference we can ask ourselves: What will I need:

- In the way of facts or figures?
- In the way of other source information?
- In the way of charts or diagrams?
- In the way of exhibits?
- In the way of questions to get at the heart of the situation?
- In the way of well-thought-out arguments?

If we are going on a long motor trip we can ask ourselves: What will I need

- In the way of routing by a tourist bureau?
- In the way of maps and schedules?
- In the way of a checkup on the car?

—In the way of overnight reservations?

—In the way of cash or travelers checks?

If we are to make a long-distance telephone call we can ask ourselves What will I need.

—In the way of facts, figures, or information?

—In the way of dates, or a calendar to refer to?

—In the way of names and addresses?

—In the way of telephone numbers?

—In the way of questions to ask?

—In the way of paper and pencil to make notes?



An entirely different way of driving farther ahead is the habit of "tickling" projects and responsibilities weeks and months in the future.

Most of us carry entirely too many of our plans and responsibilities on our minds, when, by entering them on our calendar to come up automatically at the appropriate date, we could free our minds and prevent the complications which often occur when we forget.

The business executive who tickles his projects and problems from day to day, either by instructions to his secretary or a note on his calendar, to remind him three, six, twelve months ahead to attend to such-and-such a matter, or check up on it, will be taking a fraction of a minute to save both time and mental energy.

The householder who jots down on the home calendar the dates through the year when household equipment will need oiling, when drains should be cleaned, when cars should be serviced, and when arrangements of any kind should be made will be avoiding the trouble that comes from forgetting such things.

These are only suggestive of the elementary precautions we can all use to develop the habit of driving farther ahead in our daily living.

TEN

"Try for Every Ball," Said Roxy

Many years ago when Roxy, the famous showman who planned and built Radio City Music Hall, was manager of the Capitol Theatre on Broadway, I spent a Saturday night watching him put on the dress rehearsal for the new week's show that was to open Sunday noon

At four o'clock Sunday morning Roxy and I sat in a Broadway restaurant near the theatre, eating bacon and eggs while the stage was being set for the next number to be rehearsed

"Do you play handball?" Roxy asked, apropos of nothing.

"No," I replied

"Well, you ought to. It teaches you one of the greatest lessons in life—to try for every ball. You think many balls are coming at you too high, or too low, or out of your side-reach, or too fast. But if you *try* for every one of them, you'll be surprised how many of them you will connect with."

A hundred times since then, that early morning conversation with Roxy has come back to me as I have watched myself and those around me play the game of life. If we *try* for a hit in anything and everything we do, no matter *how* impossible it may seem, we will be astonished at how many "impossible" things we can accomplish!

This try-for-every-ball philosophy applies with special pertinence to time. We are forever telling ourselves that we can't do this or that because we haven't enough time to do it. Whereas, as has already been stressed, often we could actually *do* a particular thing in the time we spend explaining why we haven't time to do it.

We are too prone to measure a job against the free time ahead of us and say, "It's no use to start that job since I won't be able to finish it" But, more often than not we would get it finished, if only we would *get at it*.

If I seem to belabor this obvious point, I do it purposely, because I believe nearly all of us waste more valuable time alibiing ourselves with "not having time" than with any other excuse for our lack of accomplishment and progress.



A business executive has a report to read. It is in a binder and looks formidable. It is two o'clock in the afternoon. Certainly he will not have time to read it before three o'clock when he must attend a conference in the president's office. However, spurred on by his conscience, he decides to cover as much of it as he can before three o'clock.

He has gone through only three pages of the report when he discovers that the next eight pages are charts, each of which flashes its message in a matter of seconds. The charts are followed by two more pages of text, ending with the writer's conclusions, which have been boiled down to a few succinct paragraphs.

To his amazement he has finished the report—and has eight minutes left over! Time enough to put in a telephone call that he couldn't make until he had read the report.

Five minutes later he walks down the corridor to the president's office with a wonderful sense of accomplishment that stays with him all the rest of the day. All because he made a *start*.

A ball—tried for and hit!

At home the man of the house has been promising his wife to hang a mirror in their bedroom—"When I have the time" It means getting out the tool box, looking up some picture wire and stringing it between the screw eyes on the back of the frame, measuring the wall to find the center, driving a nail, and hanging the mirror.

It is Saturday morning and he is waiting for a telephone call before going to the country club to play golf. He hasn't time to hang the mirror *now*, of course, but he might as well get out the tool box before he goes to the club. To his surprise he finds that there is picture wire on the mirror. And there is just the right size nail in the tool box.

He gets out the folding ruler . . . In four minutes the mirror is up. His phone call hasn't come through yet. While he is waiting and has the tool box upstairs, he might as well plane off the top of the bedroom door that has been sticking lately. There! That's done, too . . . And the hinges on the porch door need oiling . . . Yes, the oil can is in the tool box . . . That's fine! . . .

The phone rings. He had almost forgotten about that call . . . So busy doing three chores that have been begging for attention for a month.

Not just one ball but three—tried for and hit!



A secretary decides that she will not have time to do a shopping errand at noon. It will take too long to get waited on . . . And the store might not have the article in stock, anyway . . . Better wait until Saturday morning and make a special trip downtown with time enough to shop for just the right color . . . Oh, well, might just walk around that way after lunch . . . Why there is one right in the window! . . . Exactly the color, too . . . Might as well stop inside and see if the counter looks busy . . . There's an idle clerk! . . . Never got such fast service in a store before . . . Now it won't be necessary to come downtown Saturday

morning after all A ball—tried for and hit! (And time stored for use Saturday morning)



A business executive asks himself, "Why do I lug home this briefcase full of papers? . . . Three nights now I haven't even opened it . . . Too tired . . . Take an hour at least to go through it . . . But I simply *must* look at that memorandum from Westlake Manufacturing. Their man will call up about it in the morning . . . Well, now I'm posted on *that* situation . . . Why did I put this big Orrell catalog in my briefcase?—Oh, yes, I wanted to look up the price on a new part for the air conditioner . . . Well, that's not a bad price. I'll just turn down this page and order one in the morning . . . What's this magazine? Oh, I remember, I wanted to glance at a marked article . . . Very interesting. Must pass it on to Jim Eastman . . . Hello! I'd forgotten all about this letter from Rogers & Bell . . . So they *can* supply that material. Good! I can pass the letter on to Purchasing in the morning . . . Well! Well! The *briefcase is empty!* It was the thick Orrell catalog that made it bulge so that it looked like a week's work . . . All caught up with my homework—and practically the whole evening ahead!"

One ball tried for and half a dozen hit—and time to spare!



One morning a New York businessman had seven contacts to make—or at least *try* to make—when he got off the Twentieth Century in Chicago. By spending fifteen minutes in a telephone booth checking up on his seven appointments before leaving the LaSalle Street Station, and carefully scheduling his calls, plus making generous use of taxicabs, he had the surprisingly good luck to cover all seven—and catch a train for a friend's home in one of the suburbs at a few minutes after five in the afternoon.

At nine-thirty that morning he would have said such a program was utterly impossible. Certainly it was too much to expect.

But it was not too much to *try for*. Furthermore, tight as his schedule had been, instead of burning an undue amount of nervous energy he arrived at his friend's home almost as fresh as though his day were just starting—because he had had such a productive day

Seven balls—tried for and hit!

Of course, jobs that look as though they would take only a few minutes sometimes turn out to take hours. But more often they melt away when we tackle them confidently. Furthermore, the try-for-every-ball spirit so stimulates us that often we draw on a latent capacity for accomplishment that we did not suspect we possessed.

Contrariwise, the jobs we permit to pile up until we “have the time,” the jobs that look big because we haven't even taken two minutes to see what they actually do involve, frustrate us and waste that priceless form of time, our precious nervous energy.

It is surprising how soon trying for every ball becomes second nature. It is a time-saving habit that will pay any man or woman handsome dividends in increased personal efficiency.

ELEVEN

The Magic of a Ten-Minute Time Cushion

Recently I met a man who, at seventy-two, is still the active head of a large enterprise, not because he has clung to his job, but because the directors of his company insist on his continuing because his administration of the business is so able. I asked him how he had managed to keep so young and alert.

"I don't know," he replied modestly, "unless it is because for more years than I can remember, I have allowed myself a ten-minute time cushion."

"What do you mean by a time cushion?" I asked.

"Well, for example, I mentally read train times ten minutes earlier than they are scheduled on the timetable. A five-fifteen train I read as leaving at five-five, and plan to be at the station several minutes earlier than that. Or, if a conference is called for ten o'clock, I enter the time as 9 50 on my calendar. If I am going to the theatre, taking a motor trip, meeting a friend or attending church, I think of the time as being ten minutes earlier and plan accordingly. When last-minute complications develop, as they sometimes do—such as an unexpected long-distance phone call—I have a ten-minute cushion of time.

"As a result," he concluded, "I almost never have to hurry. And because I am nearly always ahead of time, my mind has a

ten-minute margin to think and plan ahead. If I am going to a business conference, for a period of ten minutes I can compose my mind and contemplate it unhurriedly. I begin mentally to survey the problem or situation to be dealt with and organize my ideas. When the conference convenes I find that nearly always I am better prepared than the other persons at the meeting."

"Ten minutes better prepared," I commented.

He nodded, "I never thought of it exactly that way, but it pretty well sums up my approach to life."



Probably the best investment of ten minutes any of us could possibly make would be to allow such a ten-minute cushion in connection with just about everything we do.

Our natural tendency seems to be to figure on *exactly* the time we need to get places, catch trains or buses, keep appointments, and do all the things that make up our routine of living. Then, if anything occurs at the last minute to delay us—as so often happens—either we are late, or we have to rush to make up for the unexpected delay. The result is that we consume a prodigious amount of nervous energy in a very few minutes.

We all know people who habitually catch the train at the last minute, arrive breathless at meetings, or just get in under the wire whatever they do or wherever they go. Such people go through life consuming time, in its energy form, that is almost certain to come off the end of their lives in shortened years of usefulness to themselves and their families.



The habit of allowing ourselves a ten-minute cushion might well start with getting up in the morning. Many of us habitually arise just in time to dress hastily, gulp our breakfast, and hurry to our day's work. By the time we arrive we are figuratively, if not literally, out of breath. We start the day having needlessly

consumed an excessive amount of nervous energy. Sometimes it takes half the morning for us to catch up with ourselves.

In far too many instances mothers have to hurry their children off to school in a whirlwind of confusion, thus doing them the great disservice of forming the habit of starting the day under tension, instead of with poise and a sense of being in control of their time.

Recently I spent a weekend in a home where there are three small children. On Sunday morning the house was quiet later than I would have expected in a family with three youngsters of Sunday School age. Suddenly it came to life.

"Hurry, children, we've overslept," I heard the mother call. "You'll have to tumble into your clothes fast or you'll be late for Sunday School."

For the next half hour pandemonium reigned! The children could not find their Sunday clothes and shoes. They put on the wrong things and had to change them. They squabbled. The parents scolded. Breakfast was hectic. The children gulped down their food, squabbled some more, and in their frantic hurry spilled food on the tablecloth. Then a wild search for their lesson quarter-hes and their hats and coats.

Finally they were pushed out the front door with further admonitions to "Hurry!" At the end of the front walk they turned and came racing back for their Sunday School money. Their parents sank down, exhausted, for a second cup of coffee, their own day off to a bad start. Because they had overslept a quarter of an hour? No, because, basically, the family lives too close to the minute hand of the clock—as most of us do. They have no cushion for oversleeping.

The extra ten minutes many families sleep every morning is the most extravagant waste of time of their whole day. They start with a handicap which the whole family pays for in a needless squandering of nervous energy. To advance the family's getting-up time by as little as ten minutes would automatically give every member a comfortable margin of time for dressing, break-

fasting, and getting off It would start the day for parents and children with a priceless sense of being in control of their affairs, and develop the habit of keeping well ahead of life and its engagements and responsibilities



Many commuters would do themselves a great service if they would plan to take the next earlier train or bus every morning If one's "regular" train or bus happens to be a bit late, it means either arriving late for work, or else hurrying so fast at the last end of the trip that one uses up just about double the energy the trip should have consumed

All any of us has to do to realize how many people get off to a bad start in the morning is to stand at the entrance of any office building, factory, or retail establishment for ten or fifteen minutes after the opening hour and observe the number of employees who arrive, breathless and guilty of countenance All because they count on the last train or bus that can possibly get them to work on time—only to have it let them down every so often Or, if they oversleep even a few minutes, they are automatically made late.

What a poor start for anyone's working-day!



The habit of allowing a ten-minute cushion is particularly valuable when going anywhere by automobile. It is so easy to think to ourselves, "I can make that in forty-five minutes" So we sit around and wait until time to leave Whereupon the person going with us isn't quite ready, or we get off on time but encounter unexpectedly heavy traffic, or we get behind poky drivers on a winding road. First thing we know, we have to "step on it" We "tense up" and burn nervous energy, not only from the pressure of fast driving but also from the chances we may have to take in passing other cars in hazardous situations. We pride our-

selves when we arrive on time, but the cost in energy has been out of all proportion to the mileage. And it is so needless.

To make it an invariable rule to plan at least ten minutes more time than we think we will need for any automobile trip, and proportionately longer for extended trips, will be to drive easily, comfortably, safely, and arrive fresh and ready for whatever the occasion—to say nothing of saving the nerves of those who ride with us and preventing the irritation of the back-seat advice that is so often volunteered when we are forced to drive too fast!



There is hardly a routine or a situation which engages any of us in our daily carry-on which will not respond to the magic of a ten-minute cushion. It will add greatly to the use-value of all our hours by conserving their energy-value. Over a span of years, it will eliminate strain on our hearts and nervous systems, and give us a sense of self-control that will make us very much more effective in our work.

Allowing a ten-minute cushion is an effective combination of the driving-farther-ahead technique and "Easy does it." What a modest time-price to pay for a habit of living that may well add years to our useful lives!

TWELVE

When You Get There —Relax!

It is related that when his spectacular motion picture, *Around the World in 80 Days*, was finally completed and ready to exhibit, Michael Todd declared to friends. "As soon as the excitement dies down I'm going to have a nervous breakdown. I've worked for it, I owe it to myself, and nobody is going to deprive me of it."

This is a whimsical way of expressing a very important rule which all of us should adopt *When you get there—relax*

A large part of the pressure of modern life is due to the fact that we build up such tensions that we fail to relax when we arrive at our destination or objective. In staying "keyed up" we continue to consume nervous energy at a fearful rate. Since energy is a valuable form of time, we are wasting time prodigally—and quite unnecessarily.

The relaxation habit is one worth really serious cultivation, for it can literally re-create not only the nervous system but the mind and the spirit. If we master it we may safely apply ourselves to the most strenuous kind of work, engage in the most arduous sports, or endure periods of intense mental concentration, without fear of wearing ourselves out. Wearing out comes, not from

the work we do, but from our not relaxing as soon as we have finished the work.



There are various effective techniques for turning off our energy, promptly and completely, when we finish a project or arrive at a destination. One way is to drop into an easy chair, stretch out our legs, and let our arms hang limp—in a word, sprawl. That is what children do when they are “played out.” One reason they have such boundless energy is because, when they have used up their supply they automatically “go limp” and store up a fresh supply. It would profit all of us to learn that lesson from our youngsters.

Another way is to flop down on a bed or couch for ten or fifteen minutes—and I mean *flop*, as though completely exhausted, even though we may not be. With eyes closed and the muscles of our bodies and minds relaxed, our batteries will start to recharge at once.

The great enemy of this kind of relaxation is that miserable phrase: “I can’t.”

“*I can’t let down.*”

“*I can’t go to sleep in the daytime.*”

“*I can’t take time to do this or that.*”

“*I can’t relax at my desk.*”

“*I can’t . . . I can’t . . . I can’t.*”

Of all the silly, inexcusable statements for grown-up men or women to make, this is perhaps the silliest and most inexcusable. Of course it will be absolutely true as long as we keep on stubbornly assuring ourselves that we can’t. For we are actually giving ourselves orders to stay awake, to continue our state of tension, to keep on needlessly burning nervous energy.

The cure is a simple one. To start saying equally stubbornly, “*I can go to sleep . . . I can close my eyes and relax . . . I can . . . I can . . . I can.*”

Of course, if we have been saying "*I can't*" for years, it may take a while to convince ourselves that we can. But we have only to persist to discover that we have been deceiving—and cheating—ourselves.

Not long ago I was on a trip with a friend with whom I shared a hotel room. Late in the afternoon we returned, thoroughly weary, from an all-day business conference.

"I'm going to take a twenty-minute snooze before dinner," I announced. "Why don't you?"

"I can't go to sleep in the daytime," he said. "Never have been able to."

"I'll make you a bet," I said. "Take off your coat and your shoes, stretch out on your back on the bed, take a few slow, deep breaths, and start saying to yourself softly, '*I can go to sleep* . . . *I can go to sleep*.' I'll bet you a dollar you *will go to sleep*."

He took me up.

I stretched out on my own bed to relax. In a matter of minutes his "*I can go to sleep*" was an incoherent mumble, and before I could get off to sleep myself he was snoring rhythmically. I had to wake him up half an hour later. He was thoroughly refreshed from his nap.

"This is the best investment of a dollar I ever made," he said as he paid his bet. "You've broken my lifelong I-can't-go-to-sleep-in-the-daytime jinx."

Of course, few of us can expect to succeed quite so easily in breaking the "*I can't*" habit, it is too firmly fixed. When we start giving ourselves the positive suggestion, quite unconsciously and stubbornly we are likely to say to ourselves, "*I can . . . No, I can't . . . I can . . . No, I can't.*" It makes such a nice rhythm! The way to cure it is with another rhythm, "*I can . . . Oh yes I can . . . I can . . . Oh yes I can*." But, even with the sternest kind of self-discipline, it may take time to make the "*I can*" stick. However, it is well worth the effort.

The routine of daily commuting by train offers an opportunity to relax which is all too often wasted. Instead of sinking limply into their seats in the evening and relaxing for a few minutes, most commuters immediately plunge into their newspapers or, worse yet, open their brief cases and continue to concentrate on business matters. The tension of hurrying for the train carries over into their reading, and far too many of them arrive home with worn minds and taut nerves, literally too tired to relax.

Whereas, if they would sink into their seats, lay their hands limply in their laps, close their eyes and breathe deeply but easily for four or five minutes, they would be refreshed and ready for their newspaper reading or briefcase work. Or else they would fall asleep for a short time, which would be still better, for they would be re-creating themselves.



A physician, who in his middle sixties has the drive and vigor of a man in his middle forties, tells me that for many years he has made it his invariable practice to take a short nap every evening before dinner.

"I have learned to drop off almost instantly into a light sleep, from which I awake without being called, feeling wonderfully refreshed. Last night, for example, I arrived home thoroughly weary after a particularly strenuous day. I had to make an important house call after dinner, and I dreaded the idea of going out again. I sank onto the bed and was asleep in a matter of seconds. Just twelve minutes later I awoke, got up, splashed my face with cold water, and went downstairs to dinner feeling like a new man. After glancing through the evening paper I went out on my house call without the least sense of weariness."

Most of us think we relax when we arrive home at the end of our day's work. It is doubtful, however, if many of us relax as regularly and as completely as does this physician, with his daily before-dinner snooze. He admitted to me that, at the outset, it

had taken him several weeks to master the trick of dozing off almost instantly

"At first I tried *too hard* to go to sleep," he said "I literally squeezed my eyes shut. Of course, that didn't work. Then I made up my mind that it made no special difference whether I actually went to sleep, so long as I was completely relaxed. From then on I just stretched out, as limply as possible, and stopped trying to think of anything, not even of going to sleep. In a week's time I found myself dozing off as easily and naturally as a child. Now it seldom takes me more than sixty seconds to lose consciousness. I strongly recommend to all of my men patients who are past fifty that they take a brief before-dinner nap every evening. It gives the heart and the nervous system a complete rest for a few precious minutes, at perhaps the most critical hour of the day. In my own case I am certain it has added years of effectiveness to my career as a physician."



It is our own fault that life is so tense and tiring. We permit it to be. We could relieve much of the strain and tension of our lives, and very possibly lengthen our years of youthful zest and vigor, if we would make it our inviolate habit to apply the philosophy expressed in the heading of this chapter: *When you get there—relax!*

Relaxing when we arrive is a practical way of rewarding ourselves for accomplishment or effort. Furthermore, it helps to quiet our minds, and, as Robert Louis Stevenson expressed it so lucidly, "Quiet minds cannot be perplexed or frightened but go on, in fortune or misfortune, at their own private pace, like a clock during a thunderstorm."

To develop the habit of rewarding ourselves with such peace of mind and serenity of spirit will be to live efficiently, enjoyably, and usefully—perhaps well past our normal "expectancy."

Section Three—Refresher Check List

In front of each concept or method is a space in which to pencil a key letter.

R—I want to remember this and adopt it as part of my philosophy or pattern of time-use.

T—I want to try this out and see if it fits my needs.

A—I definitely want to take action on this idea or to adopt (or adapt) this method or technique.

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ONE

The Problem of Managing Your Reading

To keep abreast of the world, to live life fully, and yet to accomplish what we set out to do in whatever business, profession, or calling we earn our livelihood, necessitates the wisest possible use of our time and energy.

It has been said of the immortal Emile Zola that, looking about him, "He placed himself in his time." Up to the very day of his death he kept pace with his generation. He sensed its deeper purposes, its hopes and aspirations, its doubts and fears, its foibles and its grandeur.

If we are to get the most out of life all of us must somehow manage to place ourselves in our time, to keep up with the world and take advantage of the new opportunities for rich and exciting living as they come over the horizon. Furthermore, if we are to keep this world safe and livable for our children and grandchildren, we must broaden our knowledge and tolerance of our fellow humans, whether they live across the street from us, across the continent, or on the other side of the globe. We need to deepen our understanding of their hopes and aspirations, their problems and their fears.

One of the most effective ways to keep abreast is through

reading. Yet one of the chief problems many of us face is to "find the time" to read. Certainly the world will not help us. We are, in fact, threatened with submersion by the endless stream of daily newspapers and news weeklies, popular magazines, business and professional journals, and the books on every aspect of life and every facet and problem of human experience, which pour from the printing presses in a steadily increasing torrent.

I sometimes picture Johann Gutenberg standing in front of a modern newsstand or entering one of today's public libraries or bookstores. I can hear him exclaim, "So this is what has come of my invention of moveable type! I wonder whether it has been the boon to mankind I thought it would be."



We are doomed to frustration if we attempt to keep up with the printing presses. We will be shortsighted, however, if we do not try to keep reasonably current with the news, ideas, entertainment, inspiration, and accumulated human experience and wisdom which are available to us in printed form.

"He who complains that he has no time to read," wrote the late Dr. Arthur E. Bostwick, for many years head of the St. Louis Public Library, "is one who does not fundamentally care for making contact with the minds of others. We always find time to eat and sleep and to do other things that we consider necessary to the upkeep of our physical life. When we have realized that mental food is equally necessary to the maintenance of our intellectual life, we shall take as much time as is necessary for reading also."

We may quarrel with the first sentence of Dr. Bostwick's blunt statement, but we cannot escape the truth of the second. We *do* find time to eat and sleep to nourish and refresh our bodies; but most of us are much less successful in finding time to nourish and refresh our minds.

Finding the time to read is a never-ending struggle. Obviously, none of us can read even a fraction of the books and periodicals

we might like to read. But most of us can help ourselves to sufficient time to read enough of what is published to keep ourselves current with the news of the world, and in touch with the thoughts of the world's great writers, as well as with the important developments, discoveries, and movements which affect our lives. We cannot escape the consequences if we hide behind the all-too-common excuse, "I just can't find the time to read."

Like any other time-consuming activity, our reading must be "managed." It is because this art is so important that a whole section of this book is devoted to the problem of helping ourselves to time to read.

TWO

The Knack of Rapid Reading

There are various practical approaches to the problem of helping ourselves to reading time. Not one of them is the complete answer, but a combination of them which fits our own personal temperament and situation will at least put us on top of our time-for-reading problem.

One approach is to learn the knack of rapid reading. There are excellent books and courses devoted to teaching people how to speed up their reading rate so that they can cover two or three times as much ground in the time they now devote to reading. There is on the market even a "kit" for rapid reading. Whether we resort to a book, a course, or a kit, we are literally buying reading time.

The knack of rapid reading will prove particularly helpful to business and professional people who must read many reports to keep themselves abreast of developments in their special fields. It will prove helpful, also, to people who read a great deal for pleasure, for they can enjoy many more books and keep up with more periodicals. All of us will find the rapid-reading knack helpful in our newspaper and periodical reading.

But perhaps this warning should be sounded. We ought not to permit ourselves to become so obsessed with the *mechanics* of

reading that we miss the meat in what we read. That can develop a habit of superficiality. To prevent this, a good habit is to pause after quick-reading an article, a report, or a chapter in a book, and ask ourselves Just what did I get out of reading this? Said Bacon. "Read not to contradict and confuse, nor to believe and take for granted, nor to find talk and discuss, but to weigh and consider." Two or three minutes devoted to crystallizing what we have read will multiply our reading effectiveness many times, and tend to fix the facts, figures, ideas, or philosophy in our minds

One businessman I know carries a packet of slips of paper in his pocket. When he finishes reading anything he takes out his pencil and sums up his newly acquired information or knowledge in two or three sentences on one of these slips. "In this way I 'digest' what I have just read and it is stored in my subconscious mind for future use," he explains. "I read rapidly, but I make it a point to *register* what I have read before I turn my attention to other matters."

Another way to read rapidly is to skim lightly until we come to a paragraph which seems to sum up the situation or crystallize the writer's idea, and read that very carefully, weighing each sentence. This is the technique used by many editors. It teaches one to watch for what is important, and to store away that particular idea or bit of information. To do this is often to store time.



One night I sat at the Press Table at a banquet in Washington at which the President of the United States was to speak. At each place at the table was a press release of the President's address. As each reporter sat down he started to skim the release, pencil in hand. I watched the man at my left. In an unbelievably short time he had gone through the speech. Three times he slowed up and marked a paragraph. "That's what he is going to say tonight," he observed, passing the release to me.

The reporter at my right went through the same process. I asked if I might look at his copy. The same three sections were marked. The only difference was that at one point he had bracketed two paragraphs instead of the single paragraph the man on my left had marked.

What most of us are looking for in our reading is the *nub* of the news, the *net* of the discussion of a topic, the *essence* of an argument, the *kernel of wisdom* at the heart of a dissertation. The rest is words, perhaps entertaining or informative, or interesting as to style, but not vital to our understanding, or to our use of what we have read.

In reading as in eating, what is one man's meat is another man's poison. Each of us must develop our own short-cut reading methods if we are to keep abreast of the world and its doings without devoting too much time to this phase of daily living. The chapters which follow will offer some short cuts that other people have found helpful.

THREE

The Art of Selective Reading

Another approach to managing our reading is to be intelligently selective. Because we cannot hope to read all the books and periodicals that we want to read, or feel we ought to read, is no excuse for throwing up our hands.

Between 9,200 and 9,700 new books are issued each year by this country's book industry. Approximately 7,000 periodicals are published in the United States. Obviously none of us could read even a small fraction of these books and periodicals. Nor is that necessary. In a given year only a few of the books are really important for us to read because they throw light on our personal or professional interests. Or because they are so entertaining and refreshing that we owe it to ourselves to enjoy them. Or because they help us to understand our time and enable us to think and talk intelligently and adapt ourselves to the dynamics of modern living. Or because they add greatly to our store of knowledge. Or because they help us to formulate a sound personal philosophy of life and thereby put greater purpose and pattern into our daily routine of living. The reading of books therefore becomes a problem in thoughtful selection.

The same is true of periodicals. In a given month's grist of magazines there are, as a rule, only a few articles or stories that

are really important to us personally, but those few we can hardly afford to miss, for they will add to our knowledge, stimulate our imaginations, entertain us, or enrich our lives in some special way.

The following five test questions are one man's measure of the worth of a short story, article, essay, or editorial. These he applies as he turns the pages of any magazine.

1. Does it promise to throw light on some current problem or situation which affects me?
2. Does it present news or information of importance to me in my work or my home or community life?
3. Does it promise to stimulate my mind or give my spirit a lift?
4. Can I expect it to increase my understanding of life?
5. Does it promise to provide relaxation or entertainment in proportion to the time it will take to read it?

This man states that while he used to apply these five questions consciously to each story or article, his mind soon learned to apply them automatically. If he finds nothing that warrants reading when measured against these questions, he is finished with the periodical. He refuses to waste time on any issue of a periodical just because he subscribes to it. On the other hand, if in the course of a year's issues he finds as few as a dozen articles or stories which are of real importance to him in his work or his daily living, he considers the cost of the subscription repaid, as well as the reading time he has invested.

It is the same with books. He reads reviews of many books and decides "Yes" or "No" on whether they promise to be worth the time required to read them. If the answer is "Yes," he plans definitely to read the book, and makes a note to get a copy, either from the public library or his bookseller. If the answer is "No," he ignores it. The book may get on the best-seller list, but what of it? He is reading only for himself. He has no time to follow the crowd if it is not going in his direction.

This man has an interesting rule which I have adopted for my

own reading. If three people whose judgment he respects recommend a book, a story, article, or editorial, he manages the time to read it. This is a special form of selectivity which will broaden any person's horizon with a minimum time-investment in reading.



By watching reviews and listening to the comments of well-read people we can all learn which of the current books are worth our reading time. Nor should we overlook older books which over the years have proved to be worth reading, and which may actually stand unread on our own bookshelves.

It is safe to say that any of us can find the time to read one good book a month. Yet we all know people who do not average a book a year. They say they "just can't find the time to read books." Part of their trouble is that they are so confused and frustrated by the stream of published books that they do not reach for the occasional outstanding one, and let the rest of the stream flow by without regrets or personal recriminations. Nobody can hope to read all of the really outstanding books. But that is no excuse for not reading half a dozen solid books a year for our mental and spiritual development, and as many more for sheer entertainment.

On the other hand, since we must use our hours and days wisely, and since books are only part of the fare of life, there is a point beyond which burying our noses in books becomes a vice rather than a virtue. Some people read so many books that their minds become virtually "literary sewers." They retain little or nothing of what they read. They squander valuable time that might better be spent in a sport or hobby, listening to music, watching worth-while television programs, writing letters, visiting friends, or going places. These are, I have observed, the people who most often complain that they have "no time" for outside activities. Their trouble is, they have not balanced their reading with enough other activities to make up a well-rounded life.

FOUR

Does Your Reading Boss You?

Perhaps the most important approach to managing our reading is the practice of tough-minded independence. We must boss our reading, never let it boss us.

If, as we read a news story or magazine article, we find that it is not living up to the promise of its title or heading, or that it has given us all we need to know in a few sentences or paragraphs, why should we wade through to the end just because the writer goes on and on?

Life is too short to follow a path that is leading us to no worthwhile destination. Our reading should provide a high degree of education, entertainment, or inspiration, and we need continue only as long as we have a sense of time well invested.

Today's weekly and monthly periodicals afford a wonderfully effective way to keep up with life, and to spend hours enjoyably. But that does not mean we should swallow them whole, or even try to keep up with all of them. It is our prerogative to decide which ones are of particular interest to us. Even then, we should be stubbornly selective in the choice of articles, stories, and features to which to devote time.

It is not necessary for us to read all the fare served by the editor of even our favorite magazine. As a matter of fact, we should

approach the reading of any magazine as we would order a meal. From the menu we select the various dishes and beverages which suit our taste and nutritional needs. Magazines should be read in the same way as meals for our minds.

We do not feel cheated because we cannot eat all the dishes listed on a menu. We know well enough that to do so would give us a bad case of indigestion. Why, then, should we bemoan the fact that we haven't time to read every story and article that the editor serves in his magazine? To do this would give us an equally bad case of mental indigestion. Far better to read only the stories and articles which appeal to our personal reading appetites, and allow time for their mental digestion before we pile in any more mental food.

As a matter of fact, to try to read all the articles, stories and editorials in any popular magazine would be a mistake, since it is edited to appeal to the tastes of a wide range of readers. One of the most successful popular magazine editors in America told me some years ago, "If any individual reader of my magazine finds more than three articles or stories in a given issue which are of particular interest to him, I have failed as an editor so far as that issue is concerned. It means that the issue is lopsided, for with millions of readers to cater to I must always be conscious that I am serving people with a very wide variety of interests and tastes. To cater to so large an audience the table of contents must be exceedingly diverse and many-faceted."

This explains why, if we value our time, we must use discrimination in selecting what we read in any magazine. Our problem is to devote time only to those articles and stories which the editor has put there expressly for us. Usually the title and subtitle, or the illustrations and their captions, or the opening paragraphs, will tell us enough to invite us in or warn us that this is not an article or story which will repay our reading time if we have something more important or interesting to do.

Ever since my conversation with the magazine editor just quoted, I have approached magazines in search of the three

offerings the editor had chosen for me. It is an interesting game! Of course, there are usually other stories and articles that I would enjoy reading if I had all the time in the world. But if I find three articles or stories that are definitely "my dish," I feel that I have enjoyed my full money's worth. The digest magazines are a possible exception to this rule.



Being bossed by books is even more to be guarded against, since reading a book absorbs a substantial block of reading time. If we wade through a book just because we have started it, or because we paid good money for it, we are being penny-wise and time-foolish. W. Somerset Maugham had the right idea when he said, "I do not read a book for the book's sake, but for my own."

If we allow an author five or six chapters to get into his subject, or into his story if the book is a novel, and if we find that it is not holding our interest, or does not give promise of being worth the time it will take to finish it, why should we feel any compunction about dropping it? After all, it is *our* time and *our* mental energy we are investing.

I am constantly surprised to find how many otherwise highly intelligent men and women lack reading independence. Once they start a book, they plough resolutely through it with grim perseverance, often permitting themselves to be bossed by books that bore them. What an utter waste of time!

What if a book has cost us several dollars? Or, what if we have taken the trouble to borrow it from the Public Library? Or, what if a friend lent it to us? Our time and energy are far too precious to waste wading through any book that does not live up to its promise—for us. As George Matthew Adams has expressed it so well, "A book is, or can be, a vacation."

Mr. Gutenberg would, I feel sure, approve of "tough-minded independence" as a rule-of-reading.

FIVE

What Do You Do with What You Read?

Some of us read primarily for entertainment, some for news, facts, or information, some for wisdom. To read for any or all of these purposes is good: our minds are exercised, our horizons are broadened, our lives are enriched.

There is, however, a fourth purpose which will add another dimension to the reading of any person who aims at gaining the fullest possible return for the time invested. This fourth purpose is well illustrated by the reading practice of a prominent physician, outlined in his own words:

"I read for *use*. I tell myself—so it will not seem like work—that I am reading for enjoyment or relaxation. But all the time I am reading, a little monitor in my brain is searching for information, ideas, understanding, wisdom, that I can *put to use*. Over the years I have formed the habit of stopping short in my reading whenever I strike any new idea or concept that gives me new knowledge that can help me in my profession, or any fresh insight into human nature. I sit back and close my eyes for a few seconds and let my mind explore the new thought-path. Some of my most valuable ideas and insights have come to me as I have sat thus, encouraging my mind to assimilate or apply a new concept.

"As I look back to my college years," he continued, "I realize

that the *use* I have made of the reading I have done since I left medical school has had more to do with my progress than all my formal medical education. I am constantly amazed at how often an interesting new fact, an idea, the statement of a new principle, or even an anecdote that I encounter in my reading, can be used in some way in my work. The treatment I developed for one ailment which bears my name was suggested to me by a bit of dialogue in a popular novel which started my mind on an entirely new line of thought. Since then it has become a habit with me to look for useable ideas in literally everything I read."



An Ohio manufacturer built a profitable business by working out ways to put to use in his business the ideas he read in a single book, *My Life and Work*, by Henry Ford, written in collaboration with Samuel Crowther. I strongly suspect this was the only book he had read since his college days, but it influenced his whole business career. Not a bad dividend from a single book well read!

A famous inventor, now dead, whose life was an exciting story of achievement, gave much of the credit for his accomplishments to a use-reading habit developed in his youth. Whenever anything he read struck a spark in his mind he hurried to his laboratory, no matter what the hour, day or night, and started experimenting. Thus he promptly turned his reading into research.

The use-approach can make even re-creational reading do double duty. The practice need not detract in the least from our reading enjoyment; rather, it should enhance our pleasure, for it is stimulating to the mind to discover an idea or passage which can be put to use promptly, in our work, our home, or our social activities.

An editorial writer with a reputation in newspaper circles for the freshness and timeliness of his editorials says: "When my mind is incited by some news item, or a paragraph in a book or periodical, I drop my reading instantly and start making notes.

Some of my best editorials are the result of this impulse technique"

A woman with an enviable position in the field of domestic science attributes her progress to the fact that she "activates" her reading "As a girl in my teens," she told me, "whenever I encountered a recipe that interested me I hurried to the kitchen to try it. And I still do."

It is my own experience that by watching for helpful ideas while reading, solutions to knotty problems sometimes literally leap from the printed page. Whereupon I hurry to put them to use



Why should we not let the ideas we encounter in our reading stir us to action? Why not make it a *habit* to read with an eye to what we can *do* with what we read? If we get one good idea that helps us in our work, or solves some problem which is bothering us, or gives us a fresh grip on life, it is worth many times the price of a periodical or book, as well as the time required to read it

After all, it is not how much we read that matters, it is what we *do* with what we read that makes the time we devote to reading profitable. A little reading that is *used* is more valuable to us than a whole library of literature accumulated in dead storage in our minds.

Time-Saving Techniques for Keeping Abreast

The practice of rapid reading, combined with selectivity and stubborn independence, and motivated by doing something with what we read, constitute a sound and rewarding philosophy of reading. Using these four approaches, and employing them in combination with radio and television, will give us a good start toward the intelligent and profitable use of the time we devote to reading.

The first problem is to keep up with the day's news. There is no excuse for any of us not being well posted on the news, for happily we can employ both our eyes and our ears for this purpose.

As previously mentioned, we can listen to a brief newscast while dressing in the morning—or even before getting up if we wish. Radio news is carefully selected and condensed to pack items of major interest into a quarter-hour. If we want to go to bed “right up to the minute” on the world's happenings we can pick up a short news-roundup while undressing.

However, radio newscasts cannot take the place of reading the daily newspaper. For one thing, the newspaper usually goes into greater detail, and if we want to get a full mental picture of an event we need this additional detail, otherwise our thinking is

likely to be superficial. For another, to acquire background we need to read the editorials and the interpretation of the news by competent columnists

The newspaper also gives us local items that are of special interest to us, but are not of sufficient significance to warrant broadcasting. They cover social, church, club, school, business, and local sports news

Then there are stock market reports and the financial news, cartoons, book reviews, theatrical criticisms, science news, crossword puzzles, recipes, fashions, "columns," and special feature articles.

There is, of course, a limit to the time we can profitably devote to newspaper reading. Many people waste a great deal of time absorbing a mass of non-useful information. Here, again, *selectivity* and *independence* must be brought into play. News writers are trained to give the essence of a story in the opening paragraphs. Even feature articles usually establish the author's thesis in the first three or four paragraphs. If these paragraphs definitely interest us, the time spent in finishing the article may be well invested. But if they do not promise to be rewarding, why should we go on?

A political leader of my acquaintance says he reads the opening and closing paragraphs of most editorials, and that they usually tell him what he needs to know. "If the opening and closing paragraphs pique my interest or curiosity, I can still read the intervening ones," he says, "and sometimes I do. More often, however, I find that the beginning and end serve my purpose and save my time."

This sketchy type of newspaper reading may be rough on reporters, feature writers, and editors. But no human being can hope to wade through—much less absorb—the stream of news, special articles, and editorials that pours from the presses every day. Each of us must be critically selective in our newspaper reading.

One of the greatest problems is presented by the high proportion of *speculation* in what are charitably called the "news columns." There is little point in attempting to keep up with the huge volume of speculative writing that makes up a very large part of every day's news. Like gossip, speculation is a sort of piquant salad, which adds interest to the news-meal, but which contains little real nourishment.

Some years ago I took a thick issue of one of our best-edited, most conservative metropolitan newspapers and conducted a "speculation research." Page by page, column by column, paragraph by paragraph, I went through the paper, separating the fact-reports of actual happenings from speculation in the form of predictions, guesses, or expressions of opinion as to the course events might conceivably take. The fact paragraphs I marked with a red pencil, the paragraphs of speculation with a blue pencil. The blue paragraphs dominated practically every page until I reached the business and financial section, where more of the news was factual in character. But even here there was considerable speculation under the guise of "financial news."

Ever since making this experiment, except when it is highly entertaining or definitely contributes to my understanding of what is going on in the world, I usually stop reading when an article shifts from news to speculation. Indulging in speculation may be an enjoyable pastime, but unless it impinges on our personal or business or professional interests it absorbs more time than most of us can afford to devote to it.



With the pressure of printed matter which competes for our attention, we simply *must* be rigorously selective in our newspaper reading. Even newspaper men concur. In an address to New York City school teachers on "News Selectivity," Lester Markel, Sunday Editor of *The New York Times*, conceded that reading his own paper was a problem. He estimated that an average daily issue contains 100,000 words, and the Sunday issue

450,000 This is approximately two-thirds the number of words in the Bible, including both Old and New Testaments.

"It would take seven and one-half hours to read the daily issue completely and thoroughly," he stated, "and thirty-three and one-half hours to read the Sunday edition."

He went on to point out that fast newspaper reading depended on the art of "skimming," which he declared was not "skumping," but careful selection of the important articles. Following is the system of newspaper reading which he said he used.

I start on the first page and read it all the way through, disregarding all jump lines, hoping I can pick up the jumped stories in the inside pages This gives a perspective on the news.

I recommend also a pretty full reading of the headlines Out of them you get the flavor of the news and its larger sweep When you come upon what seems to be an important story, read at least the first few paragraphs It is a journalistic custom to condense in the opening sections the outstanding facts of any story

Especially I urge you not to skimp the background articles that explain why things happen These are the most important contributions a newspaper can make

Having completed this roundup of the news and acquired a perspective on events, you then turn to the editorial page, not for a ready-made opinion, but as a check against your own conclusions

Mr. Markel stated that a person following this system could skim the daily issue of his paper in half to three-quarters of an hour, and the Sunday issue in about an hour and a half.

I have read *The New York Times* for more than twenty-five years and I come surprisingly close to checking with these time estimates Occasionally there will be long articles or editorials of particular interest to me, and the reading time will be longer, but I find I can get what Mr. Markel describes as "the flavor of the news and its larger sweep" in the time he mentions I break with him on only one practice. When an article in which I am definitely interested jumps to an inside page, I turn to the carry-over and read it at once.

To read the daily papers in this selective and independent fashion, supplementing our newspaper reading with radio newscasts, is to keep abreast of life with a surprisingly modest investment of time.



We should not forget the advertisements in the newspapers and magazines. They are news in a very special sense. They tell us what the market offers in foods and services, gadgets, entertainment, travel, special events, fashions, and—last but by no means least—timely merchandise bargains. They also tell us how to solve many of our problems, how to save our time and energy, how to do two things at once, how to make or store time, how to improve our homes, how to look our best, how to protect our health, how to invest our money. In short, they help to keep us abreast of life, with its problems and opportunities. When we lose interest in what the advertisements offer, we begin to go to seed mentally and spiritually.

E. M. Statler, the famous hotel man, once told me that he used the advertising pages of the popular magazines to keep him mentally alert. "I would no more miss an issue of *The Saturday Evening Post*, for example, than I would go without my meals for a day," he explained. "I sit down and go through each issue, studying every advertisement and asking myself: 'What idea does this advertisement suggest that would help me as a hotel man? What does it tell me about people and their needs, or about things that are coming over the horizon which, as a hotel-keeper, I should know about?'"

All of us would keep more alert mentally if we would glance at the advertisements in the magazines and newspapers, as well as the news articles and editorials, in the spirit of Mr. Statler's questions, applying them to our lives and our business or professional interests. This is another practical approach to *using* what we read.

SEVEN

Reading Can Be "Fitted In"

Few of us can spare two or three hours a day for reading books or serious literature. But who of us cannot fit in fifteen or twenty minutes during the day, or an hour in the evening, to read a chapter or two of a book, a magazine article or two, or a poem or essay?

It is surprising how much reading can be done even in fifteen minutes. Bruce Barton once wrote an advertisement for Dr. Eliot's famous "Five Foot Shelf" which made the point that any man or woman could acquire an education in the classics in "fifteen minutes a day." This is undoubtedly true.

In spite of our protestations that we are "too busy" to do any serious reading, we might as well honestly admit that it is not that most of us lack the time for reading worth-while literature, rather, it is either because we do not organize our time to fit in reading, or that we do not utilize our odd hours. In four or five hours a week devoted to carefully selected reading, any man or woman can acquire a surprisingly broad education in a special field, or an over-all education of less depth.

Our trouble is that we are too easily discouraged or dissuaded. A business acquaintance once told me that when he sat down after dinner of an evening, if he started to read a serious book

he soon got so drowsy that the pages began to blur. Consequently, on the nights he stayed home he confined himself to television or radio, or to playing games. But he really wanted to read some good books.

"Yet," said this man, "no matter how sleepy I am when I go up to bed, by the time I am in my pajamas I am wide-awake and could read the most solid kind of a book"

"Then why not keep a good book in your bedroom and make a practice of reading one chapter each night before turning off the light?" I asked him. He said he would try it.

Several months later he stopped at my table in the dining room at the club and told me with great satisfaction, "It works! Since I talked with you I've finished three books that I'd been trying for years to get time to read. I read one chapter a night and sometimes two or three. What's more, I find I drift off to sleep more quickly because my mind has shed the day's problems."



A banker who rather sheepishly admits to having a passion for poetry tells me that he keeps a book of verse in his desk drawer. Whenever during the day he finds himself frustrated over some matter, or realizes that he is straining to arrive at a decision, he reaches for the book of verse he is currently reading and indulges in a poem.

"I started this habit primarily to clear my mind and give me a fresh perspective on my problems," he told me recently, "but I have discovered that it has also enabled me to keep up with all the best poetry. I suppose I read two or three poems a day, on an average. Instead of losing the minutes it takes, I actually gain time because my mind is refreshed after what I have come to think of as my 'little vacations in verse'."



The president of a well-known corporation, who commutes an hour and ten minutes morning and evening, five days a week,

discovered that it took him less than half an hour to go through his morning or evening newspaper. Being a methodical individual, he began to plan for the use of the other forty minutes. He selected several books from his library, choosing those printed in large, easy-to-read type which would not strain his eyes when reading on the train. Each day he puts one of these books into his briefcase. After finishing the morning paper he devotes ten minutes to planning his day at the office so that his mind will be organized when he arrives at his desk. He then takes out his book and buries himself in it until the train pulls into Grand Central Terminal.

In the evening he follows a slightly different program. First he reads the evening paper, then dozes for ten or fifteen minutes, wakes up refreshed, and gets out his book.

"I used to dread my seventy-minute commuting, which is the price I pay for living in the country where my wife and children are so happy," he told me. "But now I actually look forward to it because of my twice-a-day dip into a good book. My friends ask me how I find the time to read so many books. I reply, 'The reading time is a gift to me every business day from the New York, New Haven & Hartford Railroad.'"



"The little paper-bound books are my answer to finding time to read," a busy woman told me recently. "Between my large family and my social engagements I am on the go almost constantly. But whenever I am going out I put one of these paper-bounds into my handbag. If I am ahead of time for a train, or some friend is late in keeping an appointment, or I have to wait in the dentist's office, or I have a few minutes between engagements—out comes my little book. I have learned to submerge myself almost instantly, oblivious to everything that is going on around me. It is nothing short of astonishing how many books I read in the course of a year."

"What kind of books?" I asked.

"All kinds—fiction, biography, even some of the classics I've been intending to read since I was a child. But I don't depend on being able to buy a title that interests me wherever I happen to be. I plan ahead. When I first got the idea of keeping one of these little books in my handbag, I went through the lists of titles of the various publishers of such books and selected a dozen that I really wanted to read and ordered them all through my bookstore. Before I had finished that dozen, I ordered another dozen. So I am never without a really worth-while book to read at odd times."



The problem of continuing to grow and develop mentally all through life is really no problem at all if we invest our time-margins in reading good books. They may be biographical, philosophical, inspirational, educational, scientific, or technical books. They may be popular fiction. They may be on religion or economics, art or industry, history or adventure, or devoted to some special personal interest or hobby. All provide good mental exercise. Some store time for us.

Even the "whodunits" have their place in the scheme of our book reading if they entertain and divert us so that we come back to the realities of life and work mentally refreshed. During World War I, President Woodrow Wilson found that a good murder mystery was the only type of book which would give him temporary relief from the overwhelming problems of the Presidency. Needless to say, he did not drug his mind with such books to the exclusion of more solid reading; but he did use them intelligently for re-creation.



Years ago I made a discovery that enabled me to more than double the number of books I read in a year's time. This discovery came from reading an observation by wise old Dr. John-

son. "A man ought to read just as inclination leads him, for what he reads as a task will do him little good."

In order to fit into whatever mood I may find myself when I have free time to devote to reading, I keep at least four books "going" all the time. One may be in the realm of philosophy, one biography or history, one a business book, one a popular novel.

With four books to choose from, no matter what my mood or state of mental vigor (or lack of it), one of them is sure to invite me. Usually I make no effort to control the choice. Sometimes I start with a novel, read three or four chapters, then switch to a book on business or philosophy as my mind gets turning over and signals that it is ready for more solid diet. At other times biography is my "dish" for the evening. Over a weekend I am likely to read several chapters in three or four books.

This plan would not appeal to some people, but others may find that the book-for-any-mood idea will help them to get more books read.



It boils down to this: through reading worth-while books we can continue year after year to:

- Develop our minds and enrich our spirits
- Keep abreast of the events and discoveries which mark the world's progress
- Share the new ideas and concepts of the world's keenest minds
- Enjoy the stories, poems and biographies of interesting people, by the world's master storytellers, poets and biographers

If we will do the planning and use the simple techniques that are available to us, busy as most of us are we can "fit in" a surprising number of books, as well as keep up with the periodicals that are of special interest or importance to us.

EIGHT

Reading in Projects and Episodes

Because it touches our lives at so many points, reading is so much a part of our living that it almost demands that we break it up into projects and episodes. Recall this statement made in an earlier chapter:

A major mistake we make about time is that we live life as a continuous stream of hours and days, rather than as a series of separate Projects and Episodes, each important in some way to our happiness, accomplishment, and progress

We make the same mistake about reading: we think of it as a stream of printed pages to be waded through. As a matter of fact, reading is an activity which lends itself peculiarly well to packaging in projects and episodes.

The reading we must do to keep abreast—our “must” reading—may be regarded as project-reading, and the reading we do for pleasure as episode-reading. We will find it helpful if we approach either type of reading with a sense of mentally “drawing a circle” around the article, report, speech, story, or chapter of a book we are about to read. The trick is to think of it either as a unit of valuable information or knowledge if it is of the project variety, or as entertainment if it is of the episode variety, to be read and wrapped as a package.

When approached in this fashion, the reading and wrapping-up processes merge, and we lay aside the periodical, report, speech, or book with a sense of accomplishment and satisfaction. Our project-reading becomes a highly valuable storing process which often increases the value of our time at some future date. Our episode-reading becomes a process of re-creation which re-charges our batteries-of-the-spirit and in doing so frequently increases the time-value of the next few hours.



In our project-reading we are looking for news, ideas, important facts, useful information, bits of useable philosophy, help with our problems and plans. In our episode-reading we seek good stories, stimulating concepts, beautiful descriptions, enchanting word-pictures, glimpses over Tomorrow's horizon. If we look upon our reading merely as trying to "keep up" with the stream of printed news and literature, we are likely to overlook these nuggets, and our time will be poorly invested. If, on the other hand, whenever we sit down to read, we put ourselves in a questing frame of mind, and proceed to package each nugget we encounter and store it in our minds for later use or enjoyment, our time will be employed both pleasurably and profitably.

Sometimes a complete story, a whole chapter in a book, an entire article, essay, or editorial, is of such value or interest to us that we should store it in its entirety. It may become an integral part of our philosophy of living, or it may hang on the wall of memory, a picture that enriches us spiritually. The quotations from Dr. Eliot's philosophy in earlier chapters of this book are excellent examples of the former, and Henry van Dyke's *Story of the Other Wise Man* of the latter. They are golden nuggets.



Finally, each of us can profitably invest at least a small amount of time almost daily in mind-stretching reading, in books or

periodicals outside of the normal range of our responsibilities and every-day interests.

A book about the stars, the account of an archeological exploration, or a book in some special area of art, literature, nature, science, or travel, may well open up a new vista that will stimulate us tremendously. Or reading a periodical devoted to some area of life that we have never explored may give us a mental vacation from our ordinary problems and preoccupations.

The printed page is a short cut to a fuller and more satisfying life. But we must master the art of extracting from it what we need for our progress and our pleasure, as bees extract the honey from blossoms. And we must store our nuggets, as bees store the nectar they have gathered.

NINE

The Business or Professional Man's Reading Problem

The conscientious business executive or professional person faces a particularly difficult reading problem. There are so many books and periodicals dealing with his business or profession, to say nothing of all the reports and speeches he should read, that he finds it exceedingly difficult to find the time to fit them in. But in these days of new and challenging developments, he *must* if he is not to be left behind.

One executive has worked out a reading technique of keeping up with business books which has merit, and might serve professional men as well.

"Years ago," says this executive, "I used to chafe over the business books that piled up ahead of me, some of them on the table behind my desk at the office, and others on the table beside my reading chair at home. I realized that I simply had to *do* something about the problem. I felt positively smothered with unread books, and I could see that I was never going to catch up with them. One day it occurred to me that it wasn't necessary that I carefully read each of these books, with some of them it would be enough that I knew what was in them. That night at home I picked up a book that had been on my side table for more than a year. 'I haven't time to read this whole book,' I told

myself, 'but I have a free hour and I am going to devote that hour to it and see how much I will get out of it in that time.'

He then went on to relate that he read the first two chapters of the book, which gave him the author's thesis. Then he jumped to the last chapter and read his conclusions. "This took me only half an hour," he told me, "so I spent the other half hour dipping into the other chapters, reading a paragraph or two here and there. At the end of the hour I was amazed to discover how much I had absorbed. I put the book on my library shelf with a sense of relief and satisfaction. For all practical purposes I had read it.

"After that experience I tackled my accumulation of business books, both at home and at the office, on the same time-limit basis. It soon became a fixed habit. If I have only half an hour to spare, I get what I can from a book in that time, and then put it on my bookshelf. It is available for reference if I wish to consult it again—and on occasion I find that I do. Meanwhile, I pretty well know what is in it, and could discuss it reasonably intelligently if an associate or friend were to bring it up for discussion.

"This may seem like a sloppy way of reading, but certainly it is better than my old never-get-around-to-it system," he continued. "I actually keep current with the best business books, and I find I am much better posted on the business literature of my industry than almost any man with whom I have dealings. In the old days when the business books that accumulated spelled frustration to me, I never even opened most of them. As it is, I buy many more business books than I used to, and I know at least something about what is in every one of them."

"Do you never encounter an unusually meaty or stimulating business book that you hate to treat in this fashion?" I asked.

"Yes, every once in a while. When I do, I proceed to read it carefully, not because I feel compelled to but because it is informative or stimulating enough to hold my interest."

I have since adopted this executive's technique for keeping up

with business and professional books, and I recommend it heartily. With it the professional man (or woman) can keep abreast with what is being written in his special field without any great investment of time, and minus the frustration that a pile of unopened books produces in the mind of a conscientious person.

Just to know in a general way what is in a book is often very helpful, and it is surprising how little time it takes to "sample" books on a time-limit basis. In many instances half an hour or less will suffice.



The reading of business or technical journals is another serious problem with business and professional men.

The Baker Library of The Harvard University Graduate School of Business Administration now issues a monthly publication for businessmen, *The Executive*, which presents brief summaries of magazine articles, and also of business books, with special emphasis on articles that the executive might miss because they appear in publications which would not ordinarily come to his attention.

There are several other time-saving digests in the fields of business, and the various professions and sciences. They represent opportunities to buy time at bargain prices.

Physicians, with long hours and interrupted schedules, find it particularly difficult to work in the reading they should do to "keep up."

The late Dr. Frank H. Lahey, founder of the famous Lahey Clinic in Boston, was probably as busy a surgeon, with as many demands on his time, as the medical profession has ever known. Yet unquestionably he was as well posted on the progress in medicine and surgery as any other doctor in the country.

I asked Dr. Lahey how he managed to keep abreast and at the same time maintain his daily schedule of operations and direct the affairs of the Lahey Clinic.

"It's really quite simple," he said. "By habit I am an early

riser. Usually I waken about five-thirty. When I wake up I get up. Between then and seven o'clock I get my professional reading done."

Before most men were out of bed, this world renowned physician was "up" with the journals of his profession, and the scientific papers and reports that poured in on him from all over the world. At eight o'clock he was at the New England Baptist Hospital starting on his crowded operating schedule.

He told me that he found the great advantage of reading in the early morning was that his mind was fresh and keenly receptive, and at the same time he could concentrate with assurance that he would not be disturbed. All of us know that it requires far less mental and nervous energy to read under such conditions than when there are interruptions, or even the fear of them.

This gives point to a paragraph published in the copyrighted *Potomac Patter* column, by Scripps-Howard staff writer Andrew Tully.

Think twice before accepting, if you're down this way and Sen Herman Talmadge (D., Ga.) invites you to "drop in and have breakfast with me some morning". The grub will be first-rate—bacon and eggs, or a few slices of the famous ham from the family ham-curing establishment run by Mrs. Talmadge. But the Senator eats breakfast at 4 A.M.—so he'll have time to "do some reading" before he gets to the office.

Those who "arrive" seem to make time for themselves by getting up before breakfast!



A railroad president does his reading of reports and technical and business journals late at night. He started his career as a night telegraph operator, and became accustomed to the quiet hours. "I like to sleep until the last possible minute in the morning," he told me, "so I get in my homework before I go to bed. Knowing it is behind me, I sleep like a child."

A St. Louis businessman who prefers to save up his "office

reading" to do over the weekend, rather than clutter up his evenings, takes home a bulging briefcase every Friday night

"I used to groan over the prospect of wading through that briefcase," he told me, "but I have found a way to take the torture out of it. After dinner on Friday night I sort the contents into three piles, one to be read before I go to bed that night, one to be read before noon on Saturday, and one to be read before I go to bed Saturday night.

"Often I work in my Saturday night stint on Saturday morning. When I do it gives me a wonderful ahead-of-myself feeling for the rest of the day."

The essence of this executive's "three-pile" technique is that he breaks up his weekend reading into three manageable projects, none of which seems arduous.



Today progress in business and the professions is as fast as the competition is keen. The advantage is likely to rest with the man who is best informed. Much of the needed fresh knowledge and new ideas are crystallized on printed or typewritten pages, where they are readily available to him if he has the wit—and the determination—to read and apply them. His backed-up accumulation of things-to-be-read is a constant challenge. As an over-busy lawyer picturesquely expressed it, "The pile on my reading-table chides me maliciously: 'You *can't* catch up . . . You *can't* catch up . . . You'll *never* catch up!'"

Yet the most successful professional men and women do manage, somehow, not only to catch up but to keep up. Some of their techniques have been described in this and the foregoing chapters. There are, of course, many other possibilities. The problem calls for taking a fresh look at one's working and living habits, with mind wide open to bold and unconventional ideas for organizing one's life to provide time for doing the reading that is so necessary to keep abreast in today's fast changing and highly competitive world.

Section Four—Refresher Check List

In front of each concept or method is a space in which to pencil a key letter.

R—I want to remember this and adopt it as part of my philosophy or pattern of time-use.

T—I want to try this out and see if it fits my needs.

A—I definitely want to take action on this idea or to adopt (or adapt) this method or technique.

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ONE

"The Most Thrilling Hour in History"

A high official of one of the world's largest life insurance companies, whose position requires that he constantly study the future, made a statement recently to a group of his associates which should waken all of us to the potentials of our times—and our lives.

His statement was this: "With the amazing advances made in the past dozen years in so many branches of science, with the breath-taking possibilities of the application of atomic energy to hundreds of constructive uses for the benefit of mankind, and with outer space conquered by the first man-made satellites, we are living at the most thrilling hour in all human history! Profound changes are taking place, not only on the scientific front but in the minds and hearts of all the peoples of the world—particularly the up-to-now suppressed millions. It is going to be intensely interesting to watch these millions reach for a better life, even though the process may entail strife, and at times threaten to plunge the world into war. These backward peoples are trying to accomplish in a few short years what it took our country a century and a half to achieve. Their very impatience will quicken the tempo of life, and provide many new opportunities for alert and venturesome men and women. In short,

the world is on the march in a fresh surge of progress. As President Eisenhower expressed it recently, 'We live in one of the great ages in the story of mankind.'"

Then he asked this question "How can each of us, as individuals, get the most out of living in such a time?"

That is the question facing all of us today we of the adult generation, and our teen-age children who will presently take over our responsibilities.



With the threat of war hanging over us, perhaps we can be excused if we have permitted ourselves to become frustrated with life and discouraged with the world. It is not to be wondered at that many of us have allowed ourselves to be submerged in the routine of the day's work as an escape from reality, or that in doing so we have failed to grasp the importance and the potentials of our era.

It is true that, as Amaury de Riencourt, the French scholar, expresses it, we are living in "an age of permanent emergencies." But it is also true, as Rufus Jones points out. "Strange stirrings of hope and expectation are moving across the world. It is possible that we may be on the fringe of a new and marvelous epoch . . . It is one of the evidences of man's intrinsic greatness that it is just then, when he seems to be at the end of his human resources, he rises above himself, and does what he could not do."¹

Our need is to adopt a positive attitude toward the future: hopeful rather than apprehensive, confident rather than confused, courageous rather than fearful. This is something we must do for ourselves, no one can do it for us. In cultivating such an attitude we will be instilling a similar attitude in our children, which will be one of the greatest contributions we could possibly make to their future welfare.

¹ Jones, Rufus, *Interdependence Reader*. Quoted with permission of the publishers, Hugh Birch-Horace Mann Fund, The National Education Association, Washington, D. C.

Barring another world war—and the development of deadly atomic-age missiles seems to have taken all the hope of advantage out of war even for the victor—science has opened a broad new vista which invites all of us to take a fresh look at our lives and see what we are doing with them—and how much more we might be making of them. In effect, they repeat what Henry Thoreau said at another formative period in the world's history "I have never got over my surprise that I should have been born into the most estimable place in the world, and in the very nick of time, too."



The No. 1 question facing each of us is, then, "How can I, personally, get the most out of the years ahead?"

Each of us must work out the answer to that question for himself or herself. But there are two approaches that may help us. First, instead of looking upon the world situation as a confused stream of events, many of them exceedingly disturbing, we should look upon the NOW in which we are living as a fabulously interesting episode in the history of the world, to be enjoyed in spite of its problems, perplexities, and frustrations. Second, instead of looking upon our work-life as a monotonous routine, we should think of ourselves as making an essential, even if it be modest, contribution to the welfare and progress of our little corner of the world.

The late W. K. Kellogg, founder of the business which bears his name, had a saying which carried his organization through the "valley" periods in the business cycle. "The years of depression have been the years of our company's greatest progress."

This saying might be paraphrased to fit our present troubled era. "The years of world upheaval can be the years of our greatest personal growth and progress."

Keeping abreast of what is going on around us, keeping in touch with our friends and neighbors, serving our communities, living life courageously and fully, calls for the wisest possible

use of our time. It calls, also, for the most intelligent use of our energy. All this adds up to developing a sound personal philosophy of time-use as a foundation for getting the utmost out of living at "the most thrilling hour in all human history."

TWO

Time Enough Is All We Need

Although I admit that none of us can ever hope to have all the time we might *like* to have, fifteen years of watching people who hold down really important jobs, people who are outstandingly successful in the professions, men and women who put through the world's great projects, have convinced me that every one of us can help ourselves to time enough to live really exciting lives in the new era we are entering upon. And is this not all the time we really need?

Of course, our dreams will be bigger than our realization. Even the most successful men and women, whose accomplishments are the envy of their friends, fall far short of the goals they set for themselves. If for no other reason, as they progress they keep moving their goals ahead, so they never quite catch up with their dreams.

The ambitious head of a well-known corporation told me recently that he had revised his objective six times in his business career, "And I'm as far from my present objective as I was from my first one at the age of fifteen."

"Are you having fun?" I asked.

"I sure am!" he replied with enthusiasm.

"Would you really want to 'arrive'?"

"Why not?" he demanded. Then he looked thoughtful. "No I guess I wouldn't. Life would become flat and purposeless. I fuss because there aren't hours enough in the day to do all the things I want to do, and make all the progress I'd like to make, but somehow I manage to get along with twenty-four "

"How about energy?" I asked. "Have you plenty of that?"

He laughed. "Plenty? I should say not! I could use *twice* the energy the Lord has given me "

Since this man represents my idea of a jet-propelled executive, I could not resist the impulse to ask, "Could your organization possibly keep up with you if you had twice your energy?"

"I never thought of that!" he exclaimed "Judging from the way I lose patience now, I guess it couldn't!"

"Isn't it true," I asked, "that energy is only effective as it is controlled and does useful work? If you had double your energy wouldn't you actually spend just about half of it blowing off steam?"

He pondered the question for a second. "I suspect I would," he admitted.

"Then you actually have all the time and energy you really *need*, don't you?" I pressed.

"It's a shock to me to have to admit it, but probably you are right. Yes, I have all the time and energy I really *need*. But," he added with a grin, "I'd still terribly *like* to have a lot more of both!"

So would most of us. The problem is to adjust ourselves realistically to our personal situations and limitations, organize ourselves intelligently to use the time and energy available to us, whether much or little, and stop the everlasting alibiing that we are wont to indulge in. Whenever we tell ourselves that we just "haven't the time" to accomplish some perfectly possible task, we are admitting that we have not mastered the art of intelligently using the time and energy we do have. Until we do that, what right have we to ask for more?

A woman who for many years occupied an important position in the magazine world offers a case study in living successfully on a very limited budget of clock-time and energy-time. In middle life she suffered a heart attack, with complications. While she made a partial recovery, her doctor warned her never again to work more than four hours a day, and not more than an hour at a time

Accustomed as she was to putting in a hard-driving ten-hour day at her desk, this was a terrible blow. To complicate matters, she was confined to her home and had to depend on the telephone and the mails to gather material for her writing.

Being a sensible woman, instead of wasting her reduced quota of energy in fuming over her restricted workday, she quickly adjusted herself.

"When I went into my tail spin," she told me years later, "I thought I was all washed up. I felt very, very sorry for myself. Then, one morning, I woke up thinking about an article I had written for one of the women's magazines many years before about 'tailoring' the family's living to the limitations of the breadwinner's income. I had made a very convincing case for 'making do' and still having a good family life.

"Was that article all just so much baloney, or did I really mean what I wrote?" I asked myself. Because if I did believe it, wasn't it up to me to 'tailor' my work to the four hours a day allotted by my doctor? I decided it was.

"Instead of attempting to turn out a large volume of work I estimated the production I could expect to get in my short workday. Then I went through my Idea File—that's the file in which, over the years, I have accumulated notes and material for magazine articles—and picked out my five most important ideas. 'These,' I told myself, 'will have to be worked up into major articles for magazines, which pay top rates.' You see, I could no longer afford the luxury of writing on any subject that happened to intrigue me, as I had done for years."

She went on to explain that, because she sharply focused on

one major article at a time, she had succeeded better than she had dreamed possible. And because she was putting everything she had into every article she wrote, there was a depth and meatiness to her writing that appealed to the editors to whom she sent her manuscripts. They paid her their top rates.

"As a matter of fact," I asked her, "even with your curtailed work schedule, haven't you all the time and energy you really need?"

"You are putting me on a spot with your emphasis on 'need,'" she replied with a smile.

"Well, you are accomplishing more than millions of women who can work a full day, aren't you?"

"Yes, I guess I am," she admitted.

"You are paying your way in the world as a woman and a writer by contributing helpful ideas and philosophy to millions of other women, aren't you?"

"I hope so. But—"

"But what?"

"Well, it still makes me mad to think what I could do if I enjoyed my old health and could do a full day's work."

I laughed. "You remind me of the biography I have just finished reading. Though the subject of the biography did not go into business for himself until he was forty-two, when he died he had accumulated a fortune of eighty million dollars. But was he satisfied? No indeed. For the last twenty-five years of his life he bemoaned the fact that he had started so late in life. 'If only I had gone into business for myself when I was in my early thirties,' he would grumble, feeling very sorry for himself."

Then I added seriously, "Your feeling 'mad' because you can no longer do a full day's work does you credit, for it shows that you still have a full quota of energy-of-the-spirit, which is perhaps the most important of all forms of energy. But your success in 'tailoring' your life to your curtailed supply of time and energy does you even more credit. It shows that you have good will toward your fellow humans, common sense, and a determination

to pay your own way. Any person who adds these solid attributes to his or her allotment of time and energy, be it much or little, is living a successful and useful life. What is more," I concluded, "I'll wager you are doing more good writing, and getting more of your material published, than three-quarters of the women writers who enjoy full health and vigor and can work all day every day."

"That," she said, "is the most comforting thing anyone has said to me since my four-hour-a-day sentence. And I guess it is true."



In terms of time and energy, most of us fall between the two extremes represented by my friend the jet-propelled executive and this plucky woman writer. Comparatively few of us have the energy of the former, and fewer of us are as limited as the latter. But all of us face the twin problem of wisely investing our hours and days, and of using our energy supply with such skill as to enhance the value of every hour of our time.

It will bear repeating that none of us has all the time-hours or time-energy we could wish for, any more than we have all the ability or talent we would like to possess. But too many of us try to do so many things—and chafe because we fail to accomplish all of them—that we fail to use our time and energy to the best advantage to achieve results that are easily possible to us. We are like the dog in Aesop's fable that let go of the bone he had in his mouth to possess the bigger bone he saw reflected in the water. In trying to do everything, we accomplish too little with our time, and at far too high a cost in energy.



Perhaps it is fortunate that we are chronically *unsatisfied* with the portions of time and energy we enjoy—though we should never overlook the fact that, whereas we may be lacking in energy, we have as much time as the wealthiest or most successful man or woman who ever lived. There is, however, a vast

difference between being *unsatisfied* and being *dissatisfied*. *Dissatisfaction* burns nervous energy and dissipates our energy-of-the-spirit, thus reducing the usefulness of our hours. Whereas, *unsatisfaction* can be stimulating, constructive, creative.

If we accept our allotted portion of time and energy with good grace and "tailor" our lives in realistic fashion to our limitations of ability and energy, the sharpened focus of our activities will utilize our time to the best possible advantage, and give us the perspective and the self-control to use our mental, physical, and nervous energy wisely.

To the degree that we surprise ourselves by rising above our limitations, and accomplishing things we would not have thought ourselves capable of, we will stimulate our energy-of-the-spirit—the only form of energy that will give us the derring-do to meet the truly exciting challenge facing our generation.

THREE

We Must Roll with Life

Time is the stuff of life. we literally *live* time. It is, truly, the most wonderful gift in the world. Yet, as brought out in the opening chapter, it carries no guarantee that it will serve us. It is only made available to us, we must master the art of using it.

All a book of this kind can do is provide fresh concepts, new ideas, and practical techniques. It remains for each reader to fashion his own personal philosophy and pattern of time-use, based on those concepts, ideas, and techniques which fit his own temperament and situation, and serve his personal needs.

All of us have to "roll with life," as someone has graphically expressed it. The world will not stand still for us. Yesterday's hours have slipped into the past, but tomorrow's await us, fresh and full of opportunity, ready to serve us well if we approach them with proper respect, coupled with the firm resolve to use them purposefully.

The era in which we are living demands of each of us a flexibility and a degree of maturity which have been required of no previous generation. Indeed, true maturity must underlie one's philosophy of time-use today if it is to be productive of happiness, accomplishment, and progress.

Following are some borrowed observations on maturity which are both pertinent and timely:

The richness or poverty of our lives depends upon our maturity. Every year, every event, offers us the opportunity for mature or immature responses.

One sign of growth in maturity is our readiness to learn what is expected of us under conditions of life that are changing every day. What was suitable in the world as it was last year may not do at all in the circumstances of tomorrow.

In the smaller circle of our own personality, too, there are continuing changes. None of us is altogether and always either brilliant or stupid. The brightest of us have periods when we seem feeble-minded, and the dullest of us are sometimes blessed with sharp wit. Most of us wish to be mature, because that seems to be the only state in which we can cope with our problems.

The mature person will show skill in handling the events and tests of life in such a way as to produce the greatest possible amount of happiness with the smallest possible amount of stress.

The mature person lives significantly for himself and for mankind. He rejects the temptation to be always neutral or safe. . . . He is too busy with gratifying work to engage in trifling things, and too well balanced to pay attention to miracle workers and jugglers.

The mature person is not passively receiving but is creatively acting. He has a sense of relative values and a feeling for consequences. He confronts life with some boldness.¹



The mature person saves a great deal of time by weighing the worth of life's dreams and temptations, and not being fooled by those which promise more than any truly adult person knows can be fulfilled. He does not childishly cry for the moon.

He conserves his energy by developing good springs-of-the-spirit to cushion life's shocks, disappointments, and disillusionments.

¹ From the *Monthly Letter* of The Royal Bank of Canada, Montreal, Canada December, 1956.

I know no finer expression of a mature attitude than the phrase crystallizing Dr. Eliot's personal philosophy of living, quoted in an earlier chapter. It will bear repeating "I try to cultivate a calm nature, expectant of good." Compressed into ten words is the wisdom of the ages and the serene faith of a patriarch.

After living with this challenging aim for many years, I can heartily recommend it as a mature philosophy. Such maturity is the greatest time-and-energy-saver in the world, for it prevents us from wasting our energy-of-the-spirit on the petty concerns and preoccupations which loom so large in the lives of immature people. We "roll with life" instead of resisting it, or futilely attempting to re-make the world to our own limited pattern of ideas and prejudices.

FOUR

The Greatest Time-Saving Word in the Language

Over the years, as I have listened to people complain of not having time for the things they ought to do, or would very much like to do, I have discovered that many of them suffer from a common trouble: They are timid about using the greatest time-saving word in the English language, the little two-letter word NO.

When asked to accept appointments, run for office, serve on committees, lend their names to causes, join movements, or head up projects, they agree all too readily. Then they find that they have let themselves in for responsibilities which consume their time and drain their energy to an extent they had not dreamed would be the case.

Each one of us owes a share of our time and energy to the industry, trade, craft, or profession which provides our livelihood. Also to the community in which we live, to our church or club or lodge, and to our state and our country. Not one of us has a right to live a completely selfish life, saying NO to every request for our help or cooperation. This would be to shirk our responsibility to our fellow humans, and to our children—for it is our duty to turn over to them the most livable world we can possibly achieve during our generation of stewardship.

In a sense, none of us owns all of his time and energy any more.

With the world in such turmoil, and with so many problems and responsibilities pressing on us as a nation, some of our hours and some of our energy belong to our country and our American way of life. Each of us must do his or her share toward protecting the former and preserving the latter or the consequences will be very serious.

We cannot escape this responsibility, but we can and should insist that the time and energy we devote to citizenship activities be well invested.

Over the years, while studying this particular aspect of the wise use of time and energy, I have encountered four people with rules for their own lives which might serve as guides to all of us in meeting our individual responsibilities.

The first of these is a broad-gauge rule of citizenship which guided a banker in a New York suburban community throughout his life. His rule was, *Never to seek a public office, and never to decline one if I felt myself at all qualified to fill it*.

He served one term as President of his village and several terms on the Village Board. He also served on various special boards and committees.

He accomplished much for his village because he worked with focus and purpose. At the same time he showed great respect for the time of all who worked with him.

Before his death, at the age of eighty-six, he was presented with a handsome silver bowl by his grateful fellow citizens, in appreciation of his many contributions to the community.

This banker's rule is perhaps unduly modest, for every community needs men and women who are so anxious to be of service that they take the initiative. But it will fit many men and women as a rule of conduct.



The second rule, given me by another public-spirited citizen who lives in a mid-western metropolis, boils down to this. *Never to accept an office of any kind, join a "cause," or undertake a*

committee assignment unless I intend to participate actively and conscientiously, attending meetings and carrying my full share of the responsibility.

This man will never even lend his name to any project unless, as he expresses it, "I intend to wade in up to my waist and help make a 'go' of it."



The third rule was provided by a woman who has for years been unusually active and effective in the affairs of her community: *To limit myself to one major project at a time, concentrate on it until I have made whatever contribution I can, and then step out and let someone else carry on.*

This woman has such a reputation for making a success of any job she takes on, whether it be to head the Parent-Teacher Association, solicit for the Community Fund, or serve on the Entertainment Committee of the local Woman's Club, that she is in constant demand. But when she takes on any job, whether for a few weeks or for a period of two or three years, she is adamant in her refusal to become involved in any other public activity until she has completed that particular assignment. She believes in wrapping her project-packages.



The fourth rule is the practice of one of the busiest men I know, who nevertheless never seems to be rushed. His rule is: *Always to make a definite effort to measure the time and energy likely to be required by any office or assignment I promise to take on, before accepting it.*

This man has discovered that, when judging the time factor, if he is to be realistic he must multiply his original estimate by two, or even by three. The chief reason, he observes, is because much of his time will be wasted by men and women who thoughtlessly say YES to an invitation for any kind of public service, either because they lack the courage to say NO, because they are

flattered by the invitation, or because they underestimate the time and energy they will have to expend. The result is that they become involved in so many things that they can devote little time and thought to any of them. They are late for meetings, or fail to show up at all. Or, if they do come, they explain that they have not had time to do the necessary reading, or to give the thought they should have devoted to the project.

Too often this results in long hours of profitless discussion, or in the necessity of holding another meeting. The result is that two or three conscientious people have to carry most of the load, and put in much more time than they expected to.

These are the weaknesses of nearly all loose organizations, whether in civic life, in craft, industry, or professional groups, or in church, club, or neighborhood activities. The result is that we shamefully waste each other's time. And this is what is behind this man's rule: *To measure the time before accepting.*



If all of us were to live up to the foregoing rules, the extra-curricular affairs of the world could be carried on with at least a third fewer associations, committees, and drives, and with at least a third fewer meetings to attend; and in the aggregate these meetings could consume at least a third less time than they do.

Basically, the trouble is that too many projects are undertaken by men and women who accept at face value the seductive assurance that "All we want is the privilege of using your name as one of the sponsors," or "The office staff will do all the work, you need only give direction," or "The committee needs to meet only once or twice a year." They become involved in so many enterprises that they cannot be depended upon to do any of them justice. There just isn't enough time in their busy lives. So everybody suffers.

Obviously, as individuals we cannot cure this basic trouble. But we can say a gracious but firm NO to any invitation that does not meet the qualifications embraced in these four rules for

public service. Or, if we say YES—which we should by all means when we feel we can make a contribution—we will get the most out of our own time and energy, as well as the time and energy of those associated with us, if we will follow four additional rules of public service:

1 To be regular and punctual in attending all meetings, to keep all our promises, and to fulfill all our engagements

2 To post ourselves on the purpose of the project, do any reading or research that may be called for, and be prepared promptly and cheerfully to assume whatever share of the responsibility we feel we can discharge

3 To carry out our responsibilities as promptly as possible.

4. To bow out when the job is finished.

Any person who follows these two sets of four rules will find that he can say NO to a great many calls on his time and energy, and yet accomplish far more for his community or his industry or profession when he does accept, than those who thoughtlessly say YES to all invitations.



It is, of course, perfectly possible to say NO without even using the word. We can do this by suggesting a better plan or idea, or by showing that the proposed plan or project is not necessary, advisable, or perhaps even feasible, or, in the case of public offices or appointments, by suggesting a better qualified person.

A judge declined a "draft" as candidate for mayor of a western city without saying NO. He organized, on paper, a well-thought-out "brief" for another citizen who was actually better qualified for the office, and who apparently had not even been thought of until the judge marshalled the man's qualifications and merits so convincingly that his suggestion was accepted.

The president of a retail business, who was being talked of to read a special committee in the local Merchants Association, which promised to take more of his time than he could possibly

spare, escaped the appointment by formulating three questions, the answers to which clearly showed that no committee was needed. He proved that there was a simpler way to meet the situation, and he earned the thanks of the association's board of governors.

Business and professional people, in particular, must learn constructive ways to say NO to the many demands on their time and energy. Their working hours are far too few, and their free hours too important for their re-creation, to be frittered away in meetings for meetings' sake, with little accomplishment to show for their time and energy.



NO should be used thoughtfully, and never from purely selfish motives. But its discriminating use should be a definite part of the time-use philosophy of every one of us.

The blunt truth is that we Americans tend to over-organize. We have a positive genius for starting organizations, but none for stopping them. Our great need is to get a few needed things *done*, not to keep so many organizations *going*. As a people we spend entirely too much time in attending meetings and engaging in activities that accomplish too little for the time and energy we invest. We could tighten up our organized life in many areas with great time-and-energy profit.

It goes without saying that we must work together to advance worthy causes and projects, and to fight evils. But before we start any more organizations, or launch any more projects or causes, we might well ask ourselves three searching questions.

First, is this organization likely to be useful in any reasonable relation to the time and energy of the people who will be involved?

Second, if it is a cause or project of genuine need or merit, is there not some other way of handling it than by forming a new organization? There is no virtue in organization in or of itself. Even in the most effective organizations the work is usually done

by a small number of hard-working people. Their effectiveness is often hampered rather than helped by formal organization, with all the committee meetings, conventions, etc. Why not tackle the job with a small group, and disband it when the job is done? Why create a permanent organization?

Third, if a project does require the machinery of an organization, is there not already in existence some organization which could take it on either as a special project or continuing activity? There are thousands of worthy organizations, well staffed, serving our civic, social, political, economic, and spiritual welfare, and meeting a wide range of special human needs. Before we create any more, should we not ask ourselves whether some existing organization might not serve?



The world seems in a conspiracy to keep us from making any progress in our journey to Mecca. We are constantly asked to become involved in all kinds of time-absorbing activities, in our communities, in our trade or professional associations, in local, state, and national organizations devoted to this or that interest or cause.

Each of us has only one life to live, one allotment of days and one supply of energy to invest. If we do not learn to say NO when we know in our hearts that that should be our answer, we will have no one but ourselves to blame if we never reach Mecca.

Why should we continue, year after year, to spread ourselves so thinly, when to address ourselves to one or two worth-while projects at a time and make a definite contribution to each would make us so much more effective without overdrawing our time-and-energy account?

FIVE

When You Resign —Resign!

Perhaps a special case should be made for not holding onto any office too long.

The wife of a prominent professional man had been president of the local Women's Club for seven years. Each year she told the directors she really felt she should retire and give someone else a chance at the presidency. But they always demurred and she was re-elected.

At the dinner table on the evening before a board meeting toward the close of the club year, this woman was bemoaning her dilemma

"Do you really want to retire?" her husband asked.

She assured him she did.

"Then resign."

She reminded him of the numerous times she had "tried" to resign.

"I don't mean *trying* to resign," said her husband. "That seldom works. You will have to *resign*, definitely and unalterably."

"Just how?" demanded the wife.

"Write a gracious but formal letter of resignation. Then, at tomorrow's board meeting, after the rest of the business is out

For the way, say, 'Now I have a letter to read to you.' Read your letter, hand it to the secretary, and sit down."

The next evening when the husband arrived home his wife greeted him with, "Well it worked!"

"Of course it worked," said her husband. "Which reminds me that I have a couple of letters of resignation to write myself!"

Most civic and social organizations would be better off with more frequent turnover of their officers and committee chairmen. Too many organizations get grooved in the limited ideas and experience of a few people who stay in office too long. They seem to be indispensable, and it is natural for those associated with them to insist that they are. But this is seldom true. Growth calls for a progression of office holders, each contributing a fresh combination of experience and abilities. Once in a while some electee will turn out to be ineffective, but if the rule of frequent turnover is maintained, the situation will soon be corrected.



What applies to holding office applies equally to continuing membership in organizations in which we are not really interested, and to which we are making no contribution beyond our dues.

A young lady who has helped with secretarial work on this book announced at this stage of its writing, "Last night I wrote letters resigning from two clubs I have belonged to for years. I suddenly realized that I was a misfit in both clubs. It bores me to sit for hours in meetings, listening to talks and discussions. I like to be *active*—to *do* things. From now on I am going to devote my outside time to worth-while community projects which all for *work* rather than *conversation*."

Most of us are misfits in some of the organizations in which we hold memberships. Perhaps we should continue to support them with our dues. But when it comes to investing our time and energy, we would do better to identify ourselves with activ-

ities into which we can put ourselves wholeheartedly, and make our time-investment really count

If we like to sit in meetings, attend conventions, serve on committees, and write reports, by all means we should do these things. If, on the other hand, we are of active temperament and prefer to get out and *do* things, there are organizations which sorely need our help.

We will be effective in groups or organizations that use our talents as we express ourselves most naturally and effectively. From other types of organizations we can, with good conscience, resign, to reinvest ourselves in organizations which need and will utilize our time and energy to better purpose.

SIX

Is It Really *THAT* Important?

Just as the two-letter word NO, used with discrimination and common sense, can save a great deal of our time and energy all through life, the simple question which heads this chapter is almost equally effective as a time-and-energy conserver.

It is perhaps the most common of all human failings to become so involved in what we are doing that we lose our sense of proportion. We strive and strain over some project that in the end does not begin to repay us for the days and weeks we devote to it. We struggle through months and years of the hardest kind of work on an undertaking that in the end nets us very little in accomplishment or satisfaction. We permit ourselves to become involved in enterprises which go on and on and on, absorbing our time without profiting us in anything like the measure of our time-and-energy investment.

We would save ourselves from these big mistakes, and conserve a great deal of time and energy if, from time to time, when we find ourselves struggling and worrying beyond all reason, we would stop abruptly and ask ourselves. "Is it really *that* important?"

If it is not, why should we not drop it?

The busy head of a multimillion-dollar corporation became so concerned over this involvement problem that he engaged a sagacious old professor of philosophy to help him keep a clear perspective. Once or twice a week he sits down with the professor, usually at lunch in the president's private dining-room, and discusses the projects and programs he is working on, and those he is contemplating.

"My professor friend doesn't tell me what to do or what not to do," this president explains. "He doesn't know enough about business to do that. But he asks me such sharp questions that I am able to see for myself that this or that activity is not worth the time I am spending on it and I'd better stop it at once, or that some program I am considering would make demands out of all proportion to the time my associates and I would have to spend on it. I think of him as my personal Time Monitor. He has earned his fee many times over by causing me to call a halt on things I have been doing, and preventing me from plunging into projects that wouldn't be worth the time they would consume."



Few of us can afford to hire a personal Time Monitor. But we can employ this Time Monitor Question which will serve the same purpose. Is it really *that* important?

Whenever we find ourselves involved in some activity which is absorbing an undue amount of our time, or overdrawing on our energy supply, we will do well to stand off and take an objective look at what we are doing and ask ourselves this question. If our common sense tells us it really is "*that* important" we can proceed with a will. If the answer is in the negative, we can drop it forthwith, or work our way out of it as quickly as possible. In which case we can make effective use of the time saved by turning to another project that is really important to us.

Before we embark on any ambitious plan or program which promises to absorb a great deal of our time, we can ask the question in future-tense form: Does it promise to be *that* im-

portant? If the answer is a well-considered "Yes," we can attack it with vigor, confident that we are making a profitable time-investment. If the answer is "No" we can "store" the time to use for more worth-while purposes.



Years ago a young man teamed up with an older friend in a promising business venture. Before many months had passed the young man discovered that his partner was extremely difficult to work with. However, because of their friendship, he was determined to make the partnership work. Month after month, for more than a year, he struggled doggedly to make progress in spite of a growing realization that the venture was not getting off the ground. This, plus the emotional conflict of the strained personal relationship which developed, wore him down until he was on the edge of a nervous collapse and was paying a weekly visit to his doctor.

On one of these visits the doctor sat him down for a serious talk. After five minutes of discussion the doctor asked: "Is this partner of yours a big enough star for you to hitch your wagon to for the rest of your life?"

The young man considered for a long minute. "No," he said, "I guess he isn't. I never thought of it in that light before."

He broke off his partnership promptly. It wasn't really *that* important.



The wisdom of using this Time Monitor Question is not confined to measuring major plans and projects. Even in minor matters it pays to stop, especially when we are overtired or frustrated, and ask ourselves if whatever we are doing that is consuming so much of our energy is really "*that* important."

Even so insignificant an incident as getting into an argument frequently calls for monitoring. It is human nature to try to make the other person see everything our way. But we could argue with

some people for hours without changing their minds one little bit. At the end of the argument, we would be so exasperated that the use-value of the next three or four hours would be seriously reduced. How much better to ask ourselves Is it really *that* important?

When we find ourselves depressed or worried over anything that is happening to us, or that we fear is going to happen to spoil our plans or upset our lives, there is no more effective specific than to ask ourselves sharply Is it really *that* important?

If it is not, it can safely be written off, and we can devote ourselves to our work or our pleasures with a clear mind and conscience. If it is, then we can devote the time and energy we would have devoted to worrying to taking some kind of *action* on it.



All of us might with profit apply this question to our speed when motoring. With so many serious highway accidents, and the terrific strain involved in fast driving, we could save a great deal of nervous energy at a very small cost in time by cutting down our speed.

Recently I made a practical test on a three-hundred-mile drive to my summer home that I have taken each season for twenty-six years. I have always been pretty well exhausted at the end of the trip.

This year I decided, as an experiment, to observe whatever speed limit the roadside signs called for, whether fifty or fifty-five miles on parkways and open highways, thirty-five in thickly settled sections, or twenty-five in cities and towns. As nearly as I possibly could, I kept within these requested speed limits.

I cruised along hour after hour at a steady speed, never spurning, never taking chances, letting anyone pass who wanted to—and the cars did stream past! When I pulled up at the farm I checked my driving time against the usual time for the trip. It had taken only twenty-odd minutes longer.

The pay-off was that, instead of being so exhausted that I

dreaded the job of unpacking the car, I breezed through that task and took care of half a dozen other house-opening chores before I even thought of sitting down. In fact, I was so fresh that the six hours remaining until bedtime turned out to have virtually normal use-value.

This experience convinced me once and for all that, except in some genuine emergency, making fast time on the highway isn't really "*that* important." Steady driving at a safe speed is fast enough.



Whatever we are driving toward in life, everything we do should be measured, in terms of its happiness-value, its accomplishment-value, or its progress-value, against its demands on our time and energy. The measuring process is quite simple. We need only ask ourselves: Is it really *that* important?

SEVEN

Is There a "Point of No Return"?

We all know that an airliner on a flight across the ocean arrives at a "point of no return," when it is too late for the captain to turn back or change his course. From there on he is "in for it."

It is a happy provision of nature that there is no "point of no return" in the matter of wisely using our time and energy. It is never too late to change our habits in order to get more out of our hours and energy. People who have suffered serious heart attacks prove this every day. Permitted fewer hours of activity, and forced to conserve their energy, such men and women have learned to use their minutes and their motions so efficiently that some of them actually accomplish more than they did before they were stricken.

The common-sense attitude toward our age, no matter how young or how old we may be, is to say to ourselves, "For whatever years I may have ahead of me, I will make every hour of my time and every ounce of my energy produce more in accomplishment, progress, and happiness than it is now providing me."

Even though we may be well past middle age, it is by no means too late. At the age of seventy-six, Ethel Barrymore is quoted as

saying that a good life is like a good play. it has to have a satisfying and exciting third act.

Our lives are played as a three-act drama. The first act covers the years of our childhood and education. The second act spans our productive period, with most of us the years of our greatest activity, earnings, and progress. The third act covers our closing years when we are finishing the drama of our lives.

In his novel built on the life of Alexandre Dumas, Guy Endore reveals how important this famous author and playwright considered the third act by the following incident related by Dumas himself. At rehearsal of one of his plays he was asked, "Don't you ever correct?"

"Never," said Dumas. "Though sometimes I tear up. Once when I was having a play rehearsed I suddenly stopped everything. The director wanted to know what was the matter. 'Call the fireman,' I said. 'What for?' 'Never mind. Call him.' And when they brought me the fireman I said to him, 'I saw your red hat in the back all during the first two acts. But in the third act you disappeared. Tell me why.' 'I remembered certain things I had to do,' said the fireman. 'Why didn't you remember them before?' I asked. 'I forgot. I was so interested in the play.' 'Enough!' I cried. 'Give me the third act!' And I tore the pages up. 'If that fireman forgot his duties during the first two acts and remembered them only during the third act, then there must be something wrong with it. I must write a third act that would keep this fireman from remembering his duties until the end of the play even if the house should be in flames.' And I sat down and wrote it."¹

Each of us can plan a more exciting third act than we may have been visualizing for ourselves. The person who has finished only the first act is lucky in that he has the whole second act to live through in preparation for a satisfying third act. The person who has finished the second act can still tear up his planned third act.

Even if the curtain is already up on the third act, and it is too late for a complete rewrite, he can plan changes in the portion

¹ Endore, Guy, *King of Paris*. Reprinted with permission of the publishers, Simon & Schuster, New York.

that is not yet played. Right up to the final curtain there is no "point of no return."

The last lines in a play are often the best lines!



It is a matter of making a fresh start. This involves two problems. The first is *getting a fresh focus*. If our daily living is not centered on a sound and satisfying aim—if we have no Mecca—it is not too late to sit down and write at the head of a sheet of paper: "This is what I want out of life." Then jot down in short sentences just what we do want.

Several years ago I suggested this procedure to a man in his forties who had never quite come to grips with life. Rather to my surprise he did make up such a list, and sent me a copy. I asked his permission to quote it, for it is an interesting and suggestive pattern. This is what he wrote:

MY WISH SHEET

I have arrived at middle age. It is time I took a good look at my life and made a fresh start. These are the things I would like for myself for the rest of my life:

1. To continue to enjoy good health;
2. To earn a steadily increasing income;
3. To make at least a modest contribution to the industry which provides my living,
4. To travel more;
5. To read more worth-while books,
6. To see more good plays and movies;
7. To get in more golf,
8. To meet more interesting people,
9. To increase my circle of friends and spend more time with the really worth-while ones;
10. To be able to give my family every reasonable comfort and advantage,

Take a Fresh Look at Your Life

- 1 To enjoy greater peace of mind,
2. To live not only *actively* but *usefully*, to the end that I shall pay my way in the world to the fullest extent of my abilities and opportunities.

It is quite apparent that when this man addressed himself to the novel enterprise of writing a "Wish Sheet," he uncovered motivations and depths of purpose which he had never before stilled, let alone implemented with appropriate action. Today he is a man of parts, greatly respected by his friends and associates for what he stands for, and for what he has been able to accomplish.

At middle age he may be said to have re-activated himself through the simple exercise of setting down on a sheet of paper an outline of what he wanted from life.

Is not this man's "Wish Sheet" a sound specification for a good life? What man or woman at or past middle age could not use it as a rough pattern, supplementing it with his or her special personal aims?



As for the young person with most of life ahead, the very act of thoughtfully making out a "Wish Sheet" would give him or her a wonderful head start. It is a common fault of youth to go wandering into the rosy future with no crystallized set of aims—Mecca.

Whether a young person adopts any or all of the particular wishes catalogued above, or makes out a "Wish Sheet" strictly ordered to his own very special aims and heart's desires, the act of putting such a list on paper will provide a focus that will make for more efficient time-use every hour, from that day on.

EIGHT

How to Unclutter Your Life

The story is told of John H. Patterson, the early genius of the cash register industry, that he wanted to bring home to his organization the fact that tools, materials, reports, papers, books, etc., were of no service to the business if they were not being used.

Accordingly, one morning he started through the workshops accompanied by a porter pushing a scrap-box on wheels. The first thing that caught his eye was a small locker over a workbench and he asked the workman in charge what it contained. The owner of the locker hesitated, scratched his head, and replied that he didn't know exactly.

"Scrap it," said Mr. Patterson, turning to his white-uniformed attendant.

"But there are valuable tools in it," protested the workman in alarm.

"I am sorry," replied Patterson, "but it must go into the scrap-box."

Next he noticed a chest on a high shelf. As the owner could not tell what it contained it was ruthlessly dumped, despite his protest.

In this manner Mr. Patterson went through a department or

70 Then he went to the office building. Stopping in front of a desk he asked the owner what was kept in a certain drawer.

"I couldn't tell you offhand," said the executive.

"Scrap it," said Mr. Patterson briefly, and the contents of the drawer were dumped into the scrap-box, in spite of the executive's vigorous remonstrance.

By this time the news had spread like wildfire through the plant and offices. There was suddenly an intense interest in the contents of tool chests, desks, cabinets, and cupboards. Before Mr. Patterson had gone very far he found everybody ready for him.

His "Scrap it drive" was long remembered!



Each of us could with great profit, as a long step in improving our time-use, carry out a personal "Scrap it drive."

The reason many of us do not make more progress, or live richer and more exciting lives, is that we carelessly permit our weeks and months and years to become cluttered with an accumulation of unprofitable habits, customs, prejudices, obligations, and attitudes. Our routine of living becomes grooved and automatized. We become slaves to the furniture and machinery of our living, and the unreasoning prejudices which constrict our minds and hearts.

We permit our lives to be oriented in Yesterday rather than tomorrow. We keep on reading the same periodicals, belonging to the same clubs and associations, going to the same narrow range of entertainments and events, seeing the same people, playing the same games, doing the same things, even thinking the same old thoughts—year after year after year.

Is it any wonder that life loses some of its zest?



I have always been impressed with the drastic system followed by the pastor of a church I attended years ago. Every five years,

throughout a long and active ministry, he instructed the church janitor to burn all of his sermons so that he would not use them in preaching to other congregations, or be tempted to revamp them for his own congregation

When he told me about this practice, as we sat in his study one evening, he stopped and chuckled.

"The janitor always brings me three or four of what he thinks were my best sermons and says, 'But surely, Reverend, you don't want me to burn *these*?' To which I reply, 'Burn every last one of them, James. I can't afford to be tied to the past—not even by a few golden threads.'"

Then he went on to explain further: "If, during these five-year intervals I haven't acquired an increasingly helpful understanding of how to fit Christianity into the lives of my parishioners, then I should not be preaching the gospel. When I know that every last one of my sermons has been burned my first reaction is always one of panic I have thrown away my crutches Then I begin to ask myself what new lessons I have learned during the past five years, and in no time at all I am planning a new sermon!"

No wonder this minister's church attracted young people even after he was well along in years No wonder he kept his hold on the older members of his congregation. He stimulated the young with the currency of his thinking, and because he never repeated the same ideas but kept giving them fresh points of view, his older parishioners were never bored with his sermons.



A professional man with whom I discussed the problem of "keeping current" by uncluttering one's life, told me he proposed to work out a check list to use periodically, along the lines of our discussion. I thought it one of those pious self-promises that would never be carried out, so I was surprised a few weeks later to receive a copy of the following Check-List, with permission to share it with the readers of this book:

CHECK-UP QUIZ

1. Am I reading the right newspapers and magazines? Should I discontinue any of them, or subscribe to any new ones?
2. Am I taking full advantage of the clubs I belong to? Or am I retaining my memberships from habit? Should I resign from any?
3. Do I belong to any associations or serve on any committees which have outlived their usefulness, or to which I am making no contribution, or receiving little or no benefit for the time invested? Or should I join any new one to which I might make a contribution?
4. Am I limiting myself to too small a group of friends, to the neglect of other interesting and stimulating men and women whom I might be cultivating?
5. Have I become too grooved in my living routine? Should I get up or go to bed at a different hour? Should I take a different route to the office? Should I change my luncheon habits?
6. Is my equipment for living up-to-date? (To this question he appended a comment: In my sixtieth year I have completely remodeled my office. It has proved one of the best investments I have ever made, for it has given me a sense of making a fresh and exciting start in my profession.)
7. What am I doing habitually that is a waste of time or energy?
8. Am I neglecting any phase of life—art, music, literature, the theatre, travel, sports, recreation, science, hobbies—that would have a more rewarding use of my time than some of the things I am doing?



A similar set of questions, tailored to fit our particular routine living, would serve to awaken many of us to the fact that the nests, cupboards, and drawers of our lives tend to become cluttered with our old nonsense." As a result we have no room

for new experiences which would add flavor and zest to our daily living.

If we are to take advantage of "the most thrilling hour in history," we simply cannot afford to allow ourselves to live like squirrels in a revolving cage. Nor can we afford to clutter our lives with an accumulation of Yesterday's impediments.

Once every five years is none too often to "burn our sermons" and take a fresh look at life and its opportunities!

NINE

Marshal Lyautey Set a Pattern

One day during his tenure of office as Administrator of Morocco, at the turn of the century, Lyautey, the famous Marshal of France, was riding through a forest when he came to a spot where a storm had uprooted some giant cedars, leaving large empty spaces in the grove.

As the story is related by André Maurois,¹ Lyautey called to his side the Director of Forestry who, with other officials, was accompanying him on his tour of inspection.

"Look here," said Lyautey, "you will have to plant new cedars here."

The Director of Forestry smiled. "Plant new cedars, sir? But it takes two thousand years to grow one of these trees."

For a brief minute Lyautey looked surprised. "Two thousand years?" he exclaimed. "Two thousand years? Well, then—we must plant them *at once*."

As each of us looks hopefully into the future, whatever our present age may be, or however many years we may reasonably expect to live, we can learn two of life's greatest lessons from this simple anecdote.

It suggests, first, that we stop thinking and planning in terms

¹ Copyright 1941 by The Curtis Publishing Company.

of quick returns on our time and energy, and face our *long future* as squarely as Lyautey faced the long span of years required to grow a giant cedar. Then to plan for ourselves a program for solid, deep-rooted personal growth and progress. In doing this we will enter into a practical working-partnership with time, and any man or woman who teams up with time has the most dependable partner in the world, on duty tirelessly, day and night, in season and out.

But—and this is the second lesson—we must start *at once* to invest our time and energy on this long-range basis, rather than contenting ourselves with haphazard day-to-day routine existence. We may not live to see all of our dreams realized, any more than Lyautey lived to see the cedars he had ordered planted grow to maturity. He did not expect to. But at least he could go about his affairs, serene in the knowledge that he had done his part, and from that day on time would take over. He could know, too, that he was leaving behind him beauty and protective shade for the benefit of unborn generations who would bless his memory. Just as our children and grandchildren will bless us if we invest our time and energy so intelligently that we will leave a worthy heritage of accomplishment and progress on which they can build.

In short, if we want to make steady and satisfying progress, if we want to increase both our earning capacity and our capacity to enjoy life, if we want to extract the last ounce of value out of our hours and days and the four forms of our energy, we must take charge of our lives, firmly, intelligently, purposefully—*at once*.

When we do, we will discover that, though we may never have all the time we want—and probably a reasonable measure of time-hunger is good for us all through life—we will discover that we do have all the time we really *need*!

And that is, indeed, “the greatest gift in the world.”

Section Five—Refresher Check List

In front of each concept or method is a space in which to pencil a key letter.

R—I want to remember this and adopt it as part of my philosophy or pattern of time-use

T—I want to try this out and see if it fits my needs

A—I definitely want to take action on this idea or to adopt (or adapt) this method or technique.

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